121 ‑ Preaching ‑ HEC notes from physical files

Updated July 24, 2013, over 1,200 pages

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Preaching - Biggest Difference - Past 20 Years - Joe McKeever

The Biggest Differences in Sermons and Delivery in the Past 20 Years

Joe McKeever

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

I'm betting you don't preach like Jesus.

Jesus stood up to read His text, then sat down to preach (Luke 4:16,20).

When I preach, I stand up to read and remain standing for the sermon.

Some say that in New Testament days, the congregation stood while the preacher sat.

Customs change.

Sermons change and how sermons are delivered is constantly evolving.

The pulpit, we're told, which had been around since the days of Greek orators, came into its own during the Reformation when leaders wanted to establish the centrality of preaching over the serving of the Eucharist. So, reformers tore out the altars and set up the pulpits.

These days, pulpits are harder and harder to find. No wonder preachers wear sneakers: instead of stationing themselves behind the 'sacred desk," most log a mile or more walking around the platform as they preach.

Recently, while in another state visiting relatives, I worshiped with a nearby church that was pastorless. The interim minister, now almost 80 years old, was well known as a gracious gentleman, a godly leader, and an effective preacher.

His sermon that morning lived up to the billing: it was biblical, well‑developed, effectively presented, and well‑received by the congregation made up primarily of longtime members.

The sermon was straight out of 1959.

The preacher was immaculately turned out in a sharp suit and expensive tie, he stood behind an ornate pulpit, he wore no microphone at all, and he never strayed. There were no screens, no choruses, no drama, nothing surprising. The sermon had no contemporary illustrations; every allusion was to biblical stories and texts; there was nothing personal or current in its content or presentation.

In fact, that sermon could be moved to 1959 (the year I was baptized as a college student and began paying attention to sermons) without a single tweak.

I told my wife later, "It was a great sermon except for one thing: it never touched the ground."

That is, it did not connect with anyone other than mature believers who are already highly motivated to appreciate Scripture and dig into its riches.

Sermons and sermon delivery have always been fluid, changing and adapting to trends and needs, to doctrinal ebbs and denominational flows.

As one who began preaching in 1961 and pastoring the first of six churches the following year‑and who is still at it, let me hasten to add‑I have seen many changes in pulpit ministry. After polling a number of friends of all ages and experience, here are five visible changes in sermons and sermon delivery we have observed over the past two decades.

1) MORE VISUAL

On the giant screens behind the choir ‑‑ which, following the sermon, has gone down into the congregation, another innovation from the last 20 years ‑‑ the audience can see points from the pastor's message. Often his scripture is projected on the screen, and frequently the sermon is introduced by a short film clip. Some of these clips are professionally produced for this purpose, while others may be excerpts from a movie and a television show.

The pastor may interrupt his sermon to present an audience member who walks up and performs a monologue or shares an experience. Recently, in our church, the pastor brought up two deacons to relate in a conversation how one led the other to the Lord some years back.

Posters and banners around the worship center carry out the theme of today's sermon or the title of the sermon series.

2) MORE CASUAL

Fifteen years ago, I introduced a rare phenomenon into the church I was serving. During August, I would wear no tie at all..on Sunday nights. The rest of the year, every man in a leadership position in our church was fully decked out in suit and tie every Sunday.

These days, in the same church and with a congregation numbering several hundred, a half‑dozen men may wear suits and ties. But the pastor and staff wear comfortable casual clothes ‑‑ khakis, pullovers, slip‑ons and even sneakers. And the congregation is fine by that.

http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors‑or‑leadership/biggest‑differences‑sermons‑delivery‑past‑20‑years.html

Our entire culture is becoming more casual.

Here in New Orleans, fewer and fewer restaurants insist on diners dressing up.

The local churches of our denomination where every man wears suit‑and‑tie I can count on one hand.

3) MORE PERSONAL

There was a time when pastors apologetically introduced a personal reference into the sermon. I can hear them now: "Please pardon this personal reference."

No more.

The fact is the collective ears of the congregation perk up when the preacher begins a story, particularly one that happened to him. Hearers who had been drifting off come awake when they hear, "The other day I walked out of Wal‑mart and..." They know this will be something they can identify with.

Formerly, stories were told to illustrate points of the message. These days, stories help to define the message, connect the preacher with his audience, redirect listeners, introduce new insights, and a hundred other benefits.

In modern preaching, stories often carry the freight.

My pastor, Mike Miller, says, "Terms like transparency, confessional, and dialogical are in vogue. Preaching is not as much a man behind a pulpit speaking 'to' people as a man talking 'with' people." He says, "The structure is more inductive than deductive. Pastors share their own spiritual struggles, showing themselves as fellow pilgrims on the journey."

4) MORE EXPOSITORY

My friends disagree. Some point out that sermons are getting shorter ‑‑ 20 to 25 minutes ‑‑ while others insist that 45 minutes to an hour has become the norm.

Some say preaching has become more topical and that expository preaching is a thing of yesteryear. The next email states the opposite.

I suppose it depends on who you've been hearing.

Pastor Mike said, "When I was in seminary (early 1990s), the preachers held in high esteem were Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines, and W.A. Criswell. These days, the trend has moved to guys like Rick Warren, Matt Chandler, Andy Stanley, Mark Driscoll, John Piper, and Tim Keller."

Mike adds, "What's interesting is that with the exception of one or two, they are all preaching theologically rich, lengthy, expository sermons."

5) MORE FLEXIBLE AND FLUID

Randy Hales said, "For me, [preaching has gone from] a formal stylized three points and a poem to more story‑telling and using props and other attention retaining techniques."

"At the same time," he says, "I see a strong emphasis toward a recommitment to exegetical preaching as well, so go figure!"

Go figure indeed.

Don Mabry points out that very few pastors any more keep files of illustrative materials and stories. (I suspect they do, but not in those green metal cabinets that used to dominate church offices.)

Several friends have colleagues in the ministry who do all their research online, and some preach entire messages they find there. (That was bound to happen. Twenty years ago, lazy preachers were lifting sermons from books, so it only makes sense that they would find them online today.)

A few pastors I know are involving their staffs in sermon planning. The different perspectives help the preacher to see what he might have overlooked and, from all reports, end up making the messages stronger. In the old days, sermon‑building was as lonely a craft as was the preaching of them.

Have we arrived at the Promised Land in the building and preaching of sermons?

Not in this lifetime.

So long as new generations come onto the scene with their unique lingo and slang, their technical inventions and gadgets, their peculiar way of dressing and acting and buying and learning, the task of reaching them with the gospel of Jesus Christ will be to find the language and the methodologies to accomplish that.

I told Pastor Mike, "Twenty years from now, you will be writing the article on how preaching has evolved since the ancient days of 2012. I can't wait to read it!"

Dr. Joe McKeever is a preacher, cartoonist, and the Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans. Visit him at joemckeever.com/mt. Used with permission.

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http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors‑or‑leadership/biggest‑differences‑sermons‑delivery‑past‑20‑years.html?p=2

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Preaching Changed in the Last 20 Years

Constant Change:

Where Preaching Has Been In The Last 20 Years and Where It Is Going

Rick Ezell

As things change, they stay the same. When one reflects back twenty years has things changed that much? Consider some of the names of preachers that were prominent in prominent in 1985: Billy Graham, Robert Schuller, Charles Stanley. While their names are still prominent in 2005 but their sons have taken the mantel, (Franklin Graham, Robert Schuller II, Andy Stanley).

As much as the practice of preaching has changed over the years, is it not still the same? Granted, the tools are different. In 1985 the power of the Internet lay latent, the use of video and media technology was barely visible, the thought of a team of preachers sharing a pulpit was unheard of, the prevalence of multi‑site churches with the sermon being broadcast live to other preaching points simultaneously was nonexistent. But preaching is still the same. Isn't it?

The Bedrock of Preaching

"Preaching," according to Brian Larsen, Editor of PreachingToday.com says, "must be grounded in the authority of Scripture, true to the gospel of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, clear in its relevance to the hearers, and proclaimed by people of character." That definition would be true yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The purpose of preaching remains a constant from one generation to another. "The purpose of preaching is to help the congregation interpret the world from the perspective of the Gospel," states Ronald Allen of Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN. "The preacher is called to help the congregation interpret life theologically and to help the congregation respond appropriately."

Allen, who pastors as well as teaches homiletics, is adamant about the preacher understanding the primacy of preaching. "This purpose must remain the same from age to age because the church and the preacher are the only institutions in the human world whose reason for being is to carry out that purpose. The church is called to this particular task in a way that no other community is called, and God promises to continue to work through the Spirit to enliven the preacher and church to this task." So whether one is preaching to large crowds or small, using the high tech of video imaging in the sanctuary or sending it be satellite to a multitude of locations, whether the text is read from one of a hundred different versions or translations of the Bible the preaching function has changed little. And, it must not change.

The preacher can't forget the significance of preaching in any age to any people‑ancient, contemporary, or postmodern. If the preacher does the church and society are doomed. "The church survives because of the centrality of preaching," acknowledged H. Beecher Hicks, pastor for twenty‑eight years at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, DC. In his African American tradition and with the clarity of his deep‑bass voice, he stated, "Preaching thrives in hard times. Preaching thrives best when tinged by blood‑life and death crises. When life brings people to the altar and onto their knees preaching will be a necessity to their lives."

Beecher told of viewing a picture of a contemporary sanctuary. What he saw were the rows of chairs for the choir, a majestic grand piano, an electric keyboard and other musical instruments dotting the platform, and, then, off center was a small and frail piece of furniture used for preaching. Drawing a comparison to many church's worship services today, he explained, "Emphasis in worship has shifted toward music, drama, dance, and other avenues of expression. What is required is a level of balance so we are not all for one and nothing for the other. All have their place. We are on a slippery slope when we diminish preaching. The place in which the preacher stands can have significant bearing on how one views oneself and how others views the preacher." He paused, and then added, "If I'm standing in a place (the pulpit) that is minimized then others will minimize it. If one sees the pulpit (and the preaching task) as a place that stands between the living and the dead, then that place must be prominent in the sanctuary of our worship." And, I might add, in the tradition of our churches and in the practice of our faith.

The Winds of Change

While the prominence of preaching in churches and in society has not changed and must not change, several significant changes in the past twenty years have come into the light.

First, an increasing refinement in the understanding of what it means to preach biblically has been evident. "While not confined to the last twenty years, of course, this movement is only gaining steam," states Larson, who also pastors a church on the north side of Chicago. Haddon Robinson is the dean of this movement. Robinson who teaches at Gordon‑Conwell Seminary outside of Boston has left an undeniable mark on the field of preaching with his book, Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages, his emphasis on returning to the text, his teaching, the countless students who now as preachers are following his model, and a second generation of homiletical teachers in seminaries that he has mentored continuing the tradition of preaching with the full authority of Scripture.

In addition, the return to exposition has moved from finger pointing, "ought to" prescriptions to the idea of Christ‑centered/redemptive sermons. Bryan Chapell, President at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, has been an ardent champion of this movement. Writing in his second edition of Christ‑centered Preaching, he states "The more I have become aware that God's revelation of his redemptive character occurs at the micro‑ as well as the macro‑level of Scripture, the more I have delighted to preach his redeeming character from virtually every page of the Bible." Sidney Greidanus, dean of redemptive preaching, Edmund Clowney, esteemed father of the unfolding mystery of all Scripture, Paul Scott Wilson, insightful scholar of homiletics, have led in the redemptive sermon movement's development and growing influence.

Juxtaposed to the expository model is the narrative model. Its heyday was in the 1970s and 1980s. Its champion was Fred Craddock, Professor of Preaching at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. Other notables in this tradition are David Buttrick, Professor of Homelitcs and Liturgics at Vanderbilt Divinity School, and Eugene Lowry, Professor Emeritus of Preaching of St. Paul School of Theology. But according to Tom Long, who now fills the instructional shoes of Craddock at Candler, "One major trend I see, namely the challenges to narrative preaching now arising from the right, the middle, and the left. I am chastened by all of these challenges, but finally persuaded by none of them. I think narrative arts will still be important in the preaching of the next generation." In a recently published essay, "What Happened to Narrative Preaching?" in the Journal for Preachers, Long adds, "But, at its best, the narrative impulse in preaching grows out of a deep sense of the character, shape, and epistemology of the gospel. If preaching is a sacramental meeting place between the church and the word, the hearers and the gospel, then the substance of preaching is shaped by scripture and by human experience under the sign of grace, and both of these aspects call for narration. If we are to be faithful to the biblical testimony, we will not always speak in a narrative voice‑humanity does not live by narrative alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God‑but finally we are compelled to tell the Story and the stories of the God who has acted mightily in many and divers ways and most profoundly in the raising of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead."

It seems that these two models stand in sharp contrast to one another. Twenty years ago preachers often subscribed to one system while thinking that other systems were not as effective. "Now," reports Allen, "recognizing that human understanding and communication is quite diverse. There is much more emphasis today on preachers finding their own voices and doing so in ways that honor the various ways that people hear and speak, and the different contexts in which preaching takes place." The use of various models by a single preacher seems to be more pervasive and prevalent today.

Another change in preaching has been in the area of preparation. Bryan Chapell, who not only serves as President of Covenant Seminary but also as its professor of preaching, states in his second edition of Christ‑centered Preaching, "The impact of technology and mass communication has also made preachers question traditional approaches to preparing sermons." Preachers have always used materials from others in their research and preparation. "Recently," Craig Webb, Editor of Preaching Online, LifeWay Christian Resources, remarked, "there has been a development where preachers have become sermon editors rather than sermon writers. Preachers feel inadequate with so many good resources available. In fact, the abundance and the use of those resources becomes like an addiction replacing good preparation." The expectation of the person in the pew projected onto the pastor is to hit a homiletical home run each week. The people in the pew are more demanding today than ever before. Ray Pritchard who preaches weekly at Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, IL attributes this expectation to the "influence of the larger culture, technology brings accessibility to tons of preachers so we all get compared to the best of the best every week." At one time a good church member attended their home church fifty Sundays a year and perhaps would hear an occasional visiting preacher or another preacher on vacation. Today the average church member attends their home church about 35‑40 Sundays a year. When not in their church they can hear some well‑known preachers via television or the Internet. Now, the preacher is compared with the slickest and the best.

The Role of Technology

Can the preacher "hit a home run" week in and week out? Sunday comes every seven days whether the preacher is prepared or not. Can the preacher be at peak performance each Sunday (or weekend)? Don Sunukjian of Talbot Theological Seminary thinks so. He says, "Preaching will always be effective if it does four things: One, it must have a biblical substance. Two, people must track with the preacher. Three, it must be interesting. Four, it must be relevant. Do all four and you will have good preaching. None of the four depend on 'whiz‑bang stuff.'"

The "whiz‑bang stuff" that Sunukjian is referring to is the use of technology. If anything has changed dramatically in preaching in the last twenty years it has been the onslaught of PowerPoint, video clips from movies punctuating sermons, preprinted note‑taking outlines, and anything to hold the listener's attention. Sunukjian is not persuaded that people have short attention spans. "People will watch a movie for two hours and not get bored," he asserts. Good preachers will hold the listener's attention for forty‑five minutes. Sunukjian advises preachers to observe the preachers on television who are preaching to large audiences in their churches and even larger audiences through the television media and none are using technology in their preaching. However, they are using the best of technology to broadcast their preaching.

Allen bores the debate over the use of technology to an even more fundamental state. He fosters, "We do need to figure out the degree to which preachers can and should use electronic media in preaching. I have a hunch (though I cannot yet prove it) that there is something so fundamental in the human being‑to‑human being interchange of the preacher talking directly to the congregation that the dynamic of that interaction changes when PowerPoint and other forms of media are introduced into the pulpit. We need to assess." Technology makes for a powerful servant and a horrible master. Many preachers that I spoke with while researching this article spoke of the countless hours they spend, or others in their church, on finding the right movie clip, or video vignette, to illustrate a point in their sermon. Time is unredeemable. Are the minutes spent on a hunt and find mission for a video is taken from quality exegesis and study? To quote Ron Allen again, both corporately and personally, "We need to assess."

Yet the preacher does not need to rid himself or herself of technology. Pritchard, who uses technology admirably by sending his weekly sermon out free of charge to subscribers all over the world, reminds us, "Preachers today must remain current with technology and the culture around them. They must show they are plugged into the world while remaining true to the biblical text." He adds, "Technology is driving everything. We can now preach via the Internet to the whole world."

Any More Changes?

Allen, a thoughtful examiner of many preaching traditions, notes the following observable changes in the last two decades from his perspective of teaching and preaching in a church related to a long‑established denomination that is "moderate" in theological outlook, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): "An increasing numbers of women are coming into the pulpit and into the teaching of preaching; an appreciation and understanding of various ethnic and racial cultures that have influenced preaching; a dramatic increase in detailed attention to the context of preaching; an understanding of the congregation as a 'culture' and preaching needing to fit into (as well as be transformative of) that culture; and a new respect for logic, propositions, clarity of ideas, and even deduction and for ways that such things can work together with imagination."

And there are more. One cannot look back on the last twenty years without acknowledging the seeker movement whose champions are Bill Hybels and Rick Warren. The influence of how‑to, seeker‑driven sermons has been mightily felt in the pulpits of evangelical churches. In those churches that have adopted this model for ministry a whole new wave of people are now entering their sanctuaries. The preacher is not only preaching to the already convinced, depending on the success of implanting the model in their church, the preacher may be addressing a larger number of non‑believers who share a greater level of biblically illiteracy than the person in the pew.

The Future and Beyond

Where is preaching headed? Bryan Chapel states, "I remain convinced that an expository approach is the most fruitful as the mainstay of a pulpit ministry (and I rejoice in the recent spate of books re‑endorsing this biblically committed approach), but always we can learn from other communication fields how people hear and how better to minister God's Word to them." Others note the resurgence of the expository model. Ron Allen affirms, "I am convinced that expository preaching continues to be the most reliable way for sermons to accomplish their fundamental aim. However, I also know that doctrinal messages, topical sermons, and various modes of experimental homilies can accomplish the purpose of preaching." While there is not one right style of preaching, any more than there only one right style of Scripture, the emphasis on Scriptural authority will remain high.

James Earl Massey, Dean Emeritus, Anderson School of Theology, comments that "in the next five years preaching must have a greater focus on the essentials of the Christian faith. At a time of pluralism in the United States where it is difficult to distinguish between the church and the world, the need for preaching will be to distinctively focus on the fundamentals of Christianity." He continues, "The battle in the church, and in many respects in preaching, will be over sexual issues."

The primacy of preaching must continue to be central in our churches and the purpose of preaching must remain biblical in the truest sense of the word, if it is to continue to make a difference in the world on this side of the apocalypse. The sermon must come from the heart of the preacher delivered to the heart of hearer. Preaching is still a face‑to‑face and a heart‑to‑heart encounter. The preacher, therefore, must be committed to integrity, authenticity, and transparency. A preacher, whether his or her name is Smith, Jones, Casey, or Brown, who preaches from a platform of biblical authority, speaking to people on real life issues, from a broken and contrite heart will never lack for an audience whether the date is 1985, 2005, or 2015.

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Rick Ezell has served churches in South Carolina, Illinois, Indiana, and Kansas. He has an earned a Doctor of Ministry from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Master of Theology from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored six books:

Sightings of the Savior

The 7 Sins of Highly Defective People

Cutting to the Core: Revealing the Distinctive Life of Character

Defining Moments: How God Shapes Our Character Through Crisis

Hitting a Moving Target: Preaching to the Changing Needs of Your Church

Strengthening the Pastor's Soul: 8 Disciplines to Personal Authenticity and Pastoral Effectiveness

In addition, he has authored over 700 articles in such periodicals as Leadership, Pursuit, The Rev., Home Life, Decision, The Lookout, and many others.

www.rickezell.net/Constant%20Change‑‑Where%20Preaching%20Has%...?

Also see

http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11550568/page-4/

http://www.preaching.com/printerfriendly/11550568/

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Preaching - John Knox never entered a pulpit until he was 40 years old

John Knox never entered a pulpit until he was 40 years old and

biographers conclude that much of the fire and energy of his preaching

was due to the fact that the flame had been so long pent up within his

breast.

- - - 1 Pet 1:2 - 1 Peter 1:2

Preaching

Date Originally Filed - 6/1989.19

Dwight L. Moody, by his own admission, made a mistake on the eighth

of October 1871 ‑‑ a mistake he determined never to repeat.

He had been preaching in the city of Chicago. That particular

night drew his largest audience yet. His message was "What will you

do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

By the end of the service, he was tired. He concluded his message

with a presentation of the gospel and a concluding statement: "Now I

give you a week to think that over. And when we come together again,

you will have opportunity to respond."

A soloist began to sing. But before the final note, the music was

drowned out by clanging bells and wailing sirens screaming through the

streets. The great Chicago Fire was blazing. In the ashen aftermath,

hundreds were dead and over a hundred thousand were homeless.

Without a doubt, some who heard Moody's message had died in the

fire. He reflected remorsefully that he would have given his right

arm before he would ever give an audience another week to think over

the message of the gospel.

- - - Psa 32:6 - Psalms 32:6 - - 2 Cor 6:2 - 2

Corinthians 6:2 - - Heb 3:15 - Hebrews 3:15

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Evangelist Paul Rader had often urged a banker in New York State to

Date Originally Filed - 2/1989.17

Evangelist Paul Rader had often urged a banker in New York State to

receive Christ, but the man would not make the decision. One day the

preacher sensed that God wanted him to go immediately and speak to him

again. So he took a train to the town where the man worked, hurried

to the bank, and found his friend standing in the doorway.

"Rader," he said, "I'm glad to see you! I wrote a telegram begging

you to come, but later changed my mind and didn't send it."

"That's all right," said the evangelist, "your message came through

anyhow by way of heaven."

Under deep conviction of sin, the banker was impressed by Rader's

earnestness and his special effort to reach him with the gospel, and

within a few minutes he accepted the Lord. In his newfound joy he

exclaimed, "Did you ever see the sky so blue or the grass so green!"

"Hallelujah, you're truly converted!" came Rader's response. "It's

just like the song says, 'Heaven above is softer blue, earth around is

sweeter green, something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never

seen."

Suddenly the banker gave a strange gasp and fell over dead! He had

been saved at the very brink of eternity. What if Paul Rader had

delayed or failed to stress the banker's urgent need of turning to the

Lord immediately? That man may have been lost.

- - - John 3:3‑7 - John 3:3‑7 - - 2 Cor 6:2 - 2

Corinthians 6:2 - - 1 Pet 1:23 - 1 Peter 1:23

Date Originally Filed - 8/1985.25

Shortly after he opened his first plant, Thomas Edison noticed that

his employees were in the habit of watching the lone factory clock. To

the inventor who was an indefatigable worker, this was

incomprehensible. He did not indicate his disapproval verbally.

Instead he had dozens of clocks placed around the plant, no two

keeping the same time. From then on clock watching led to so much

confusion that nobody cared what time it was.

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Preaching - Preach It! Date Originally Filed - 3/1987.23

J. I. Packer said, "Certainty about the great issues of the

Christian faith and conduct is lacking all along the line. The

outside observer sees us staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and

stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all where

we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are

muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes

action.... Unlike the first Christians who in three centuries won the

Roman world, and those later Christians who pioneered the Reformation,

and the Puritan awakening and the Evangelical revival, and the great

missionary movement of the last century, we lack certainty. Why is

this?

We blame the external pressures of modern secularism, but this is

like Eve blaming the serpent. The real truth is that we have grieved

the Spirit... we stand under divine judgment. For two generations our

churches have suffered from a famine of hearing the words of the

Lord." That's a tragic truth.

- - - Acts 20:20 - Acts 20:20 - - 1 Cor 9:16 - 1

Corinthians 9:16 - - 2 Tim 4:1‑2 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑2

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Preaching "The Value of Expository Preaching and Teaching,"

In an article entitled, "The Value of Expository Preaching and

Teaching," Roger Johnson laments:

All too often the biblical passage read to the

congregation resembles the national anthem played at

sporting events. It gets things started but it is not

referred to again during the lesson.

The authority behind preaching resides not in the

preacher but in the biblical texts.

‑‑ Stephen Olford, \italic{Preaching the Word of God}, p. 23‑24.

- - - Isa 8:20 - Isaiah 8:20 - - 2 Tim 3:16‑17 - 2

Timothy 3:16‑17

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Preaching - Be Relevant - Date Originally Filed - 3/1988.27

The penetrating words of the German Reformer Martin Luther

frequently flash through my mind:

"If you preach the Gospel in all aspects with the exception of the

issues which deal specifically with your time ‑‑ you are not preaching

all the Gospel."

- - - Acts 17:22‑31 - Acts 17:22‑31 - - Acts

22:1‑21 - Acts 22:1‑21

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Gospel - Good Works - Social Gospel

Why are you taking up so much space in Christianity Today for social issues?

Before I was saved, I belonged to five liberal churches and they

all talked about the social gospel, but I never saw that they

practiced it. They taught me how to dance, drink, smoke, go to

nightclubs, shows, and so on. When I got converted at the age of 19,

I met God's people who believed in the Book, the blood and the blessed

hope. They took me to the rescue missions where I dealt with dope

addicts and drunkards. They took me to prisons where I had the

privilege of winning to Christ rapists, murderers, robbers, and so on.

Isn't this the real social gospel? Haven't God's people always been

zealous of good works?

Let's not get caught in the trap that the liberals have something

to offer us in their so‑called social gospel. While they are talking

about it, let's keep doing it.

‑‑ Jack Wyrtzen, Word of Life, Schroon Lake, N.Y.

- - - Eph 2:10 - Ephesians 2:10 - - 1 John 3:18 - 1

John 3:18

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Preaching - The Light of Your Face - Date Originally Filed - 12/1985.7

Charles H. Spurgeon in training young ministers said to his

students, "When you talk about heaven let your face light up with a

heavenly glory. When you tell about hell, your everyday face will

do."

- - - Psa 34:5 - Psalms 34:5 - - Acts 6:15 - Acts

6:15

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Preaching - Out in Wyoming's ranching country a severe snowstorm hit the area

Out in Wyoming's ranching country a severe snowstorm hit the area

the Sunday before Christmas. Although the minister felt certain that

nobody was going to show up for his church service because of the

weather, he opened up the church just in case someone might appear.

Sure enough, through the cold and snow, a weather‑beaten cowboy

appeared in the doorway of the church. The minister did not recognize

the man as one of his parishioners, however he invited him in and the

cowboy took a seat near the back of the church. After a wait of 20

minutes, it became apparent to the minister that this cowboy was going

to be the only person to attend his church that day.

Approaching the man, the minister asked him if he was expecting a

full service. "I've been a cowboy out in this part of the country all

my life," the fellow answered. "And all winter long I feed 500 cows

every day. And come rain or shine, sleet or snow ‑‑ whether one comes

or all 500 come ‑‑ I feed them every day." Duly inspired, the

minister launched into a sermon that lasted the better part of an hour

and a half. At the conclusion, the minister walked over to the cowboy

and asked him how he enjoyed the service. "Like I said before," the

cowboy answered, "I've been feeding 500 cows every day all my life.

And come rain or shine, sleet or snow ‑‑ whether one comes or all 500

come ‑‑ I feed them every day. But if only one cow comes, I don't

dump the whole feed load."

- - - John 21:15‑17 - John 21:15‑17

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Preaching - In his book Real Salvation, R. A. Torrey tells that when

he was studying theology in the university, D. L. Moody came to town

for meetings. Torrey and a few of his friends went to hear him and

concluded that although he was uneducated, he knew some things they

didn't. Wanting to learn the secret of his success, they said to the

evangelist, "We wish you would tell us how to do it." They meant, of

course, how do you preach and get such good results? Moody responded

by inviting them to come back the next evening, promising to answer

their question then. Before the service the following night, they met

with the evangelist again. After giving them a few words of Scripture,

he said, "You go at it! The best way to learn to do it is to do it!"

- - - Deut 5:32‑33 - Deuteronomy 5:32‑33

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Preaching - Attitudes of the Christian - Church Attendance

One person noted: In any church service, the congregation preaches

more than half the sermon. The congregation brings an atmosphere with

it. The atmosphere is either a barrier through which the preacher's

word cannot penetrate; or else it is such an expectancy that even the

poorest sermon becomes a living flame. How did you come to church

today?

- - - 1 Chr 16:29 - 1 Chronicles 16:29 - - Psa

100:2‑4 - Psalms 100:2‑4 - - Acts 16:14 - Acts 16:14

<><

Preaching - Bible - Study of Commanded

Vance Harner said that he heard about a guy who was going to be

original or nothing, and he was both!

- - - 2 Pet 1:12‑16 - 2 Peter 1:12‑16

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Preaching - Gratitude To Men - Bible Study of Commanded

Henry David Thoreau once wrote: "It takes two to speak the truth.

One to speak and another to listen." Walt Whitman confessed: "To have

great poets there must be great audiences." I like that ‑‑ someone to

write and someone to appreciate. To have great messages from God,

there must be a well‑prepared spokesman and there must be an equally

well‑prepared congregation. They work in tandem with each other.

- - - Acts 15:7 - Acts 15:7 - - Eph 4:29 - Ephesians

4:29

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Preaching - Where do Sermons Go? Faithful Servants - Bible - Study of Commanded

Date Originally Filed - 11/1985.13

When a local preacher died, his relatives found he had neatly tied

up the messages he had delivered and placed a card on top of them with

this inscription: "Where has the influence gone of all these sermons I

have preached?" Underneath he had scribbled in large letters, "OVER."

On the other side this answer was found: "Where are last year's

sunrays? They have gone into fruits and grain and vegetables to feed

mankind. Where are last year's raindrops? Forgotten by most people,

of course, but they did their refreshing work, and their influence

still abides. So, too, my sermons have gone into lives and made them

nobler, more Christlike, and better fitted for Heaven." His comments

apply to the efforts of all who faithfully give out the Word.

- - - Isa 55:11 - Isaiah 55:11 - - 2 Tim 4:2 - 2

Timothy 4:2}, - 5 - 2 Timothy 4:5

<><

Preaching - Communication - Date Originally Filed - 4/1986.7

The Right Image

Recently I read an interesting item in the newspaper that

illustrates the importance of mental associations in making decisions.

A high school in Virginia offered a course called "Home Economics for

Boys." Needless to say, it got little attention. So the following

year it was renamed "Bachelor Living." You guessed it!

The effect was overwhelming ‑‑ 120 boys promptly signed up. The

curriculum never changed. It still offered traditional instruction in

cooking, sewing, laundry, and money management. But it needed the

right image before the students would give the class a second look.

As we present Christ to the world, let's not forget that the

message must never change, but the methods may vary.

- - - Col 4:6 - Colossians 4:6

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Preaching - Compassion - Richard Baxter wrote - The Reformed Pastor

Richard Baxter wrote a book called \italic{The Reformed Pastor}.

He wrote in 1656 and he said this: I marvel how I can preach slightly

and coldly. How I can let men alone in their sins and that I do not

go to them and beseech them for the Lord's sake to repent; however

they take it and whatever pains or troubles it should cost me.

I seldom come out of the pulpit but my conscience smites me that I

have been no more serious and fervent than I have. It accuses me not

so much for want of human ornaments or elegance, not for letting fall

an uncomely word, but it asks me:

How could you speak of life and death with such a heart?

Shouldst thou not weep over such a people and should not thy tears

interrupt thy words?

Should not thou cry aloud and show them their transgressions and

entreat and beseech them as for life and death.

- - - Jer 13:17 - Jeremiah 13:17 - - Acts

20:19‑21 - Acts 20:19‑21 - - Acts 20:31 - Acts 20:31

<><

Preaching - Prayer - Watchfulness - Robert Murray McCheyne

Robert Murray McCheyne and his church were visited by a young

pastor. The pastor was taken around by the custodian to see the

church where McCheyne had preached. The custodian took him into a

little room and there was a little stool. The old custodian said,

"Sir, You see that stool?" The young man thought, well that's

strange, to show me a little stool. The old custodian said, "That's

the stool where Pastor McCheyne would kneel and weep before he'd ever

preach."

Then he took him into the pulpit and the pastor saw this great

Bible in the pulpit. He saw that it was all watered and stained and

he said, "Well, what is all this on the Bible? The custodian said,

"Well, that's the tears that Brother McCheyne would shed while he

preached." He is dead but he is still moving lives.

- - - Acts 20:18‑21 - Acts 20:18‑21

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Preaching - Christ the Theme of - Spiritual Discernment

Date Originally Filed - 10/1987.15

Billy Gets Nervous Too!

Billy Graham's hands often go clammy and his knees shake before he

preaches.

While most would agree that standing in front of a crowd of people

is probably not their favorite occupation, this is not a confession

one would expect from the man who has preached the Gospel to more

people than anyone else in history.

It is, however, a confession that should encourage a great many of

us.

"Every time I stand before a crowd I feel so unworthy to preach the

Gospel," Graham admitted. "I feel fearful that I may say something or

do something that may mislead someone, because I'm talking to eternal

souls who have the possibility of living in heaven forever."

- - - Acts 4:12 - Acts 4:12

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Preaching - The Significance of Sermons

Commanded - Bible - Powerful in its Influence

Date Originally Filed - 10/1988.14

Several years ago the \italic{British Weekly} printed a letter to

the editor:

"Dear Sir: I notice that ministers seem to set a great deal of

importance on their sermons and spend a great deal of time in

preparing them. I have been attending services quite regularly for

the past thirty years and during that time, if I estimate correctly, I

have listened to no less than 3,000 sermons, but, to my consternation,

I discover I cannot remember a single one of them. I wonder if a

minister's time might be more profitably spent on something else?

Sincerely...."

That letter triggered an avalanche of angry responses for weeks.

Sermons were castigated and defended by lay and clergy, but eventually

a single letter closed the debate:

"My dear Sir: I have been married for thirty years. During that

time I have eaten 32,850 meals ‑‑ mostly of my wife's cooking.

Suddenly I have discovered that I cannot remember the menu of a single

meal. And yet, I received nourishment from every one of them.

I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have

starved to death long ago. Sincerely...."

‑‑ James D. Berkley, \italic{Preaching to Convince

- - - Matt 4:4 - Matthew 4:4

3,000 Sermons, 32,000 Meals

‑ 9/2003.101

3,000 Sermons, 32,000 Meals

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and

complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've

gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard

something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't

remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and

the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at

all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor"

column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until

someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked

some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire

menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this... They all

nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my

wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be

spiritually dead today!" When you are DOWN to nothing.... God is UP to

something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and

receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual

nourishment!

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Preaching - Commanded

Many preachers think of doctrine as undesirable and impractical. A

major Christian magazine recently published an article by a well‑known

charismatic speaker. He mused for a full page about the futility of

both preaching and listening to sermons that go beyond mere

entertainment. His conclusion? People don't remember what you say

anyway, so most preaching is a waste of time. "I'm going to try to do

better next year," he writes; "that means wasting less time listening

to long sermons and spending much more time preparing short ones.

People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as

they get out before noon."

‑‑ Dr. John MacArthur

- - - 1 Tim 4:6 - 1 Timothy 4:6 - - Titus

1:9 - Titus 1:9 - - Titus 2:1 - Titus 2:1

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Preaching - Commanded2 - Date Originally Filed - 8/1989.14

You don't get a well‑fed church from serving fast food.

‑‑ Bill Hybels

- - - Ezra 7:10 - Ezra 7:10

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Preaching - Commanded3 - Date Originally Filed - 8/1988.12

Preach the Word

The story is told about an old American Indian who attended a

church service one Sunday morning. The preacher's message lacked real

spiritual food, so he did a lot of shouting and pulpit pounding to

cover up his lack of preparation. In fact, as it is sometimes said,

he "preached up quite a storm." After the service, someone asked the

Indian, who was a Christian, what he thought of the minister's

message. Thinking for a moment, he summed up his opinion in six

words: "High wind. Big thunder. No rain." Yes, when the Scriptures

are neglected, there is "no rain." Only when preaching is based on

God's Word are His people blessed and refreshed.

- - - 2 Tim 4:2‑5 - 2 Timothy 4:2‑5

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Preaching - Gospel - Worldwide - Missions - Date Originally Filed - 4/1987.8

Mission for Dead

Ever since the close of the Second World War Japanese volunteers

have been searching the island of Saipan for the bodies of soldiers

killed there. Of the 40,000 to 50,000 Japanese soldiers and

dependents believed to have died there more than 30 years ago, only

about half have been found. Because of that, there will be missions

in the future looking for the dead.

The Church, too, has a mission for the dead. Men and women are

"dead" in trespasses and sins, and the Church must seek them out and

proclaim life in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, like the

bones of Ezekiel's vision, these dead shall live.

- - - Eph 2:1‑10 - Ephesians 2:1‑10

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Preaching - Destroyed by Silence - Destructive - Sin - Date Originally Filed - 1/1986.24

History records a remarkable account of the destruction of an

ancient town. The watchmen on the walls would call out whenever they

thought they saw a foe approaching. Sensing that the people had begun

to resent them for giving these false alarms, they decided to remain

quiet. Regrettably, not long afterward the enemy actually did come.

The city that could have been saved was assaulted and devastated, and

nothing was left but smoking ruins. Later someone erected a small

memorial inscribed with the following epitaph: "Here stood a town that

was destroyed by silence."

Can God's people afford to be silent about the sin that surrounds

them?

- - - 2 Tim 4:1‑4 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑4

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Preaching - Make Your Point - Plainness of Speech - - Date Originally Filed - 4/1987.9

Winston Churchill advised, "If you have an important point to make,

don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit in once.

Then come back and hit again."

- - - 1 Cor 2:1‑5 - 1 Corinthians 2:1‑5

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Preaching - Our safety and sense of well‑being ‑‑ our life, in fact ‑‑ depends

Our safety and sense of well‑being ‑‑ our life, in fact ‑‑ depends

on the degree to which we can trust the accuracy of the people we deal

with. For example: in July 1971, a jumbo 747 jet was damaged on

takeoff in San Francisco.

Fortunately, no one was killed, although there were serious

injuries. Later the pilot testified that the flight dispatcher had

told him his runway was 9,500 feet long. Which it was; however,

mostly because of construction work, only 8,400 feet were available.

This led to a miscalculated takeoff speed and the accident.

Investigators thus came down to the use of incorrect takeoff speed,

resulting from a series of irregularities, tiny pieces of

misinformation, or lack of information. Every day thousands of

passengers stake their lives on the gamble that bits of information

vital to their safety will be transmitted with absolute, scrupulous

accuracy.

Pastor, your people are like that. They depend on you to

communicate the unchanging Word of God with clarity and accuracy. So

have at it! Preach the Word!

- - - 2 Tim 2:15 - 2 Timothy 2:15 - - 2 Tim

4:1‑2 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑2

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Preaching - "If I had a thousand dollars, do you know what I would do with it?"

"If I had a thousand dollars, do you know what I would do with it?"

The speaker? Adoniram Judson, the well‑known missionary to Burma.

The person to whom the question was put supposed that the veteran

missionary would invest the money in foreign missions.

But, pointing to a college devoted to the training of ministers and

missionaries, Judson said emphatically: "I would put it into such

institutions as that. Planting colleges and filling them with

studious young men is planting seed corn for the world!"

- - - Ezra 7:10 - Ezra 7:10 - - 2 Tim 2:15 - 2

Timothy 2:15

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Preaching - Worship Of God Commanded

Martin Luther once asked, "How has it happened that in the secular

field there are so many fine poems and so many beautiful songs, while

in the religious field we have such rotten lifeless stuff." He said,

"We must read, sing, preach, write and compose verse, and whenever it

was helpful and beneficial I would let all the bells peal, all the

organs thunder, and everything sound that could sound.

- - - Psa 7:17 - Psalms 7:17 - - Psa

150:1‑6 - Psalms 150

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Preaching - Wise Words

Many churches wisely have a large clock behind the congregation

where it is quite obvious to the preacher. Some don't. The one where

Rev. Sam has been invited to speak did not. As time when on, Brother

Sam finally commented that he had forgotten his watch and asked, "Does

anyone have the time?"

"There's a calendar right behind you," piped a voice.

- - - Eccl 5:3 - Ecclesiastes

5:3}, - 7 - Ecclesiastes 5:7 - - Acts 20:9 - Acts

20:9

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Preaching - It All Started with a Visit - Date Originally Filed - 2/1986.30

A Sunday School teacher, a Mr. Kimball, in 1858, led a Boston shoe

clerk to give his life to Christ.

The clerk, Dwight L. Moody, became an evangelist. In England in

1879, he awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Fredrick B. Meyer,

pastor of a small church.

F. B. Meyer, preaching to an American college campus, brought to

Christ a student named J. Wilbur Chapman.

Chapman, engaged in YMCA work, employed a former baseball player,

Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work.

Billy Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, N.C. A group of local men

were so enthusiastic afterward that they planned another evangelistic

campaign, bringing Mordecai Hamm to town to preach.

During Hamm's revival, a young man named Billy Graham heard the

gospel and yielded his life to Christ.

Only eternity will reveal the tremendous impact of that one Sunday

School teacher, Mr. Kimball, who invested his life in the lives of

others.

- - - Acts 4:36 - Acts 4:36 - - Acts 9:27 - Acts

9:27 - - 2 Tim 2:2 - 2 Timothy 2:2

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Preaching - The Crisis in the University, Sir Walter Moberly

In his book The Crisis in the University, Sir Walter Moberly cites the failure of evangelicals to penetrate university

campuses with the gospel. To those who claim to follow Christ he

says, "If one‑tenth of what you believe is true, you ought to be ten

times as excited as you are."

- - - Rom 1:15‑16 - Romans 1:15‑16 - - 2 Cor

9:1‑4 - 2 Corinthians 9:1‑4 - - Eph 3:8‑21 - Ephesians 3:8‑21

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Preaching - Encouragement - Date Originally Filed - 7/1989.16

Alan Loy McGinnis, in \italic{Bringing Out the Best in People},

writes:

A proven motivator will make it to the top before a proven genius.

When Andrew Carnegie hired Charles Schwab to administer his far‑flung

steel empire, Schwab became the first man in history to earn a million

dollars a year while in someone else's employ. Schwab was once asked

what equipped him to earn $3,000 a day. Was it his knowledge of steel

manufacturing? "Nonsense," snorted Schwab. "I have lots of men

working for me who know more about steel than I do."

Schwab was paid such a handsome amount largely because of his ability

to inspire other people. "I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm

among the men the greatest asset I possess," he said, and any leader

who can do that can go almost anywhere and name almost any price.

- - - Acts 11:22‑24 - Acts 11:22‑24 - - 1 Thes

2:3‑13 - 1 Thessalonians 2:3‑13 - - 2 Tim 4:1‑2 - 2 Timothy

4:1‑2

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Preaching - Spurgeon How come so many people come and hear you preach?

Date Originally Filed - 1/1989.23

Enthusiasm is so important for pastors and Christian workers. I

think it was Spurgeon who was asked, "How come so many people come and

hear you preach?" He said, "I guess because I'm enthusiastic." "How

do you get enthusiastic?" "Well, I'll tell you how to do it. Get a

can of kerosene, pour it all over you, light yourself on fire, and

they'll come watch you burn."

- - - Psa 69:9 - Psalms 69:9 - - John 2:17 - John

2:17 - - 2 Cor 9:2 - 2 Corinthians 9:2

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Preaching - The Pastor's Prayer - Christ the Theme of - Date Originally Filed - 4/1994.9

I do not ask

That crowds may throng the temple,

That standing room be priced;

I only ask that as I voice the message

They may see Christ!

I do not ask

For churchly pomp or pageant,

Or music such as wealth alone can buy;

I only ask that as I voice the message

He may be nigh!

I do not ask

That men may sound my praises

Or headlines spread my name abroad;

I only pray that as I voice the message

Hearts may find God!

I do not ask

For earthly place or laurel,

Or of this world's distinctions any part;

I only ask, when I have voiced the message

My Saviour's heart.

‑‑ Ralph Spaulding Cushman

- - - Rom 6:6 - Romans 6:6 - - Gal 2:20 - Galatians

2:20

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Preaching - Ministers - Date Originally Filed - 6/1994.16

Tony Manconi, vacationing in New Hampshire, visited a Nashua church

for the service. The pastor's sermon was very brief, but the pastor

explained. He said his family's new puppy got into his study the night

before and chewed up his notes. Afterward at the door, Tony asked,

"Pastor, are there any more puppies in that litter? I'd like to take

one to my pastor."

‑‑ Paul Harvey, 8‑18‑93.

- - - Prov 10:19 - Proverbs 10:19 - - Eccl

5:3 - Ecclesiastes 5:3

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Preaching - Bible - Blessings - Pronounced by Men

Date Originally Filed - 3/1994.3

W. Edwards Deming's hand in Japan's economic revolution is what

\italic{U.S. News & World Report} called in a 1991 story one of

history's nine "Hidden turning points." The others:

1. The Apostle Paul, whose preaching and eloquent writings led to

mass acceptance of Christianity.

2. The bubonic plague, which killed one‑third of Europeans in less

than four years, ended serfdom, and made way for the Renaissance.

3. Christopher Columbus. He didn't discover America, but he opened

the way for colonization.

4. Napoleon Bonaparte for his hand in giving rise to a middle

class, which led to the flowering of democracy.

5. The Japanese rejection of an invention ‑‑ firearms ‑‑ in the

16th and 17th centuries. The Samurai preferred swords.

6. Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, pioneer of realism,

the first to tell it like it is.

7. The public's love affair with Madame Chiang Kai‑shek in the

1940s, which clouded U.S. foreign policy for more than 30 years,

helping to spark involvement in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

8. The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and the pill.

‑‑ Del Jones, \italic{USA Today}, 12‑21‑93, p. 2b.

See: - 1 Cor 1:18‑29 - 1 Corinthians 1:18‑29 - - 1

Cor 2:4‑7 - 1 Corinthians 2:4‑7 - - 1 Cor 15:6‑11 - 1

Corinthians 15:6‑11

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Preaching - Earnestness - Date Originally Filed - 12/1993.18

A bishop ... asked David Garrick, the great actor, how it was

possible to take fiction and produce such a tremendous effect on his

audience.

Garrick replied, "Because I recite fiction as if it were truth, and

you preach truth as if it were fiction."

‑‑\italic{ Walter L. Lingle

- - - 1 Cor 9:16 - 1 Corinthians 9:16 - - 2 Tim

4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2 - - Jude 1:3 - Jude 1:3

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Preaching - Communication - Plainness of Speech

Date Originally Filed - 12/1993.19

Author James C. Himes, writer of speeches for five Presidents,

wrote an award‑winning Churchill biography. His new book, \italic{The

Sir Winston Method, }is a must read for every pastor. This book offers

Sir Winston's five rules of oratory and leadership, which Himes

distilled from Churchill's private notes.

1) Begin strongly.

2) Stick to one theme.

3) Use simple language.

4) Paint word pictures.

5) End with emotion.

- - - Col 1:28 - Colossians 1:28 - - Col

4:6 - Colossians 4:6

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Preaching - Religious Awakenings - Date Originally Filed - 10/1990.12

Jonathan Edwards (1703‑1758) was a brilliant theologian whose

sermons had an overwhelming impact on those who heard him. One in

particular, his famous "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," moved

hundreds to repentance and salvation. That single message helped to

spark the revival known as "The Great Awakening" (1734‑1744).

From a human standpoint, it seems incredible that such far‑reaching

results could come from one message. Edwards did not have a

commanding voice or impressive pulpit manner. He used very few

gestures, and he read from a manuscript. Yet God's Spirit moved upon

his hearers with conviction and power.

Few know the spiritual preparation involved in that sermon. John

Chapman gives us the story: "For 3 days Edwards had not eaten a

mouthful of food; for 3 nights he had not closed his eyes in sleep.

Over and over again he was heard to pray, 'O Lord, give me New

England! Give me New England!' When he arose from his knees and made

his way into the pulpit that Sunday, he looked as if he had been

gazing straight into the face of God. Even before he began to speak,

tremendous conviction fell upon his audience."

- - - Psa 51:13 - Psalms 51:13 - - Acts 4:33 - Acts

4:33 - - 1 Thess 1:4‑5 - 1 Thessalonians 1:4‑5

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Preaching - Examples of Gospel - Date Originally Filed - 10/1990.15

An engineer at the Christian Broadcasting Network pleaded innocent

to spreading the gospel. Well, with the way he allegedly spread it,

Thomas Hainey is charged with sending out the message "Repent, the

kingdom of God is at hand" in the middle of a cable network show. No,

it wasn't a CBN show; it was a Playboy Channel softcore sex film.

‑‑ \italic{Associated Press} 5‑23‑90

- - - Matt 3:1‑2 - Matthew 3:1‑2 - - Acts

26:20 - Acts 26:20

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Preaching - Date Originally Filed - 7/1991.8

Peter Cartwright, a nineteenth‑century circuit‑riding Methodist

preacher, was an uncompromising man. One Sunday morning when he was

to preach, he was told that President Andrew Jackson was in the

congregation, and warned not to say anything out of line.

When Cartwright stood to preach, he said, "I understand that Andrew

Jackson is here. I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks.

Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn't repent."

The congregation was shocked and wondered how the President would

respond. After the service, President Jackson shook hands with Peter

Cartwright and said, "Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I

could whip the world."

‑‑ \italic{Leadership}, Vol. XII #1, Winter, 1991, p. 49

- - - 1 Cor 9:16 - 1 Corinthians 9:16 - - 2 Tim

4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2

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Preaching Hell - Date Originally Filed - 9/1991.26

Sydney Harris wrote, "Neither heaven nor hell has been presented by

preachers to make the former attractive or the latter credible so that

the mass of people are moved to yearn for the one or fear the other."

‑‑ John Wesley White, \italic{Survivors}, p. 589.

- - - Luke 12:5 - Luke 12:5 - - Luke 16:19‑31 - Luke

16:19‑31 - - Rev 21:1‑4 - Revelation 21:1‑4

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Preaching - Cant Remember One Sermon - Cant Remember One Meal

Date Originally Filed - 6/1992.5

Dear Sir:

It seems ministers feel their sermons are very important and spend

a great deal of time preparing them. I have been attending a church

quite regularly for the past 30 years, and I have probably heard

3,000. To my consternation, I discovered that I cannot remember a

single one. I wonder if a minister's time might be more profitably

spent on something else? Sincerely....

For weeks a real storm of editorial responses ensued. The uproar

finally was ended by this letter:

Dear Sir:

I have been married for 30 years, during that time I have eaten

32,580 meals ‑‑ mostly of my wife's cooking. Suddenly, I have

discovered that I cannot remember the menu of a single meal. And yet,

I have received nourishment from every single one of them. I have the

distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death

long ago. Sincerely....

‑‑ Editorial Letters, \italic{The British Weekly.

- - - Ezra 7:10 - Ezra 7:10 - - 2 Tim 2:15 - 2

Timothy 2:15 - - 2 Tim 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2

Preaching - quit saying it.

Date Originally Filed - 6/1992.17

Many a public speaker knows just what to say, but not when to quit saying it.

‑‑ Source Unknown

- Proverbs 10:19 - - Ecclesiastes 5:3

Ecclesiastes 5:7

Preaching 'Make truth plain, make truth interesting, make truth moving.'"

Date Originally Filed - 6/1992.22

W. Ian Barclay noted, "For over twenty‑five years of ministry I

have had a Latin text on my desk: 'VERITAS PLATEAT, VERITAS PLACEAT,

VERITAS MOVEAT,' which means, 'Make truth plain, make truth interesting, make truth moving.'"

Robert Chalmers warned, "My preaching is a failure if it can charm

but not change."

‑‑ David L. Olford, ed., \italic{A Passion For Preaching,} p. 33.

- - - 1 Cor 1:17 - 1 Corinthians 1:17 - - 2 Tim

4:1‑2 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑2

Preaching - Jokes about dull sermons are plentiful and familiar:

Date Originally Filed - 6/1992.26

Jokes about dull sermons are plentiful and familiar:

\* The difference between a good sermon and a bad one is a nap.

\* The eternal gospel does not require an everlasting sermon.

\* If all the people who sleep in church were placed end to end, they

would be more comfortable.

\* If, in fact, all the jokes about dull sermons were placed end to

end, they would more than fill a pew.

‑‑ Tom Mullen,\italic{ Mountaintops and Molehills}, p. 57.

Preaching - longwinded toastmaster

Date Originally Filed - 6/1992.30

A British foreign secretary was once at the mercy of a longwinded toastmaster who took up all the remaining time and most of the

audience's patience. When the toastmaster finally introduced the

secretary with the words, "And now our foreign secretary will give his

address," the gentleman stood up and said, "I have been asked to give

my entire address in the remaining five minutes. That I can do. Here

it is: 10 Carlton Gardens, London, England." He then sat down, to

appreciative applause.

‑‑ Dorothy Leeds, \italic{Powerspeak,} p. 37.

- - - Prov 10:19 - Proverbs 10:19 - - Eccl

5:3 - Ecclesiastes 5:3}, - 7 - Ecclesiastes 5:7

Preaching - Self‑control - Twenty Minutes of a Sermon.

Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.1

Most congregations would agree with Mark Twain, "Few sinners are saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon."

‑‑ Tom Mullen, \italic{Mountaintops and Molehills}, p. 57.

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Preaching - Seizing Opportunity - Accountability

Witnessing

Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.3

He cannot afford to be influenced by the reaction of his

congregation, or the opposition of his critics: he is accountable to

his Lord alone.

Jesus transformed a mountainside into a Bible conference; a fishing

boat into an evangelistic platform; a wellside into a counseling room;

and, the shadows of evening into an opportunity to lead Nicodemus into

the experience of the new birth. He preached the Word continuously and

so must we.

‑‑ Stephen Olford, \italic{Preaching the Word of God}, p. 14‑15,

19.

- - - Mark 16:15 - Mark 16:15 - - Rom

1:15‑16 - Romans 1:15‑16 - - 2 Tim 4:1‑2 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑2 -

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Preaching - Zeal - Spiritual Power - Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.6

I never see my preacher's eyes,

No matter how bright they shine.

When he prays he shuts them tight,

When he preaches he closes mine.

‑‑ John W. Drakeford, \italic{Humor in Preaching}, p. 30.

See: - Col 4:6 - Colossians 4:6 - - 1 Cor 2:3‑5 - 1

Corinthians 2:3‑5

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Preaching - Harvard did a study some years ago on the subject of nonverbal communication

Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.7

Harvard did a study some years ago on the subject of nonverbal communication, and I was stunned at its conclusion. The research revealed that there are over seven hundred thousand different ways to communicate without words.

‑‑ Tim Hansel, \italic{When I Relax I Feel Guilty}, p. 51‑52.

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Preaching - Walk of Believers - Date Originally Filed - 5/1993.25

A Spanish artist was employed to paint the Last Supper. It was his

object to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and

countenance of the Lord Jesus; but he put on the table in the

foreground some ornamental cups, the workmanship of which was

exceedingly beautiful. When his friends came to see the picture on the

easel, every one said, :What beautiful cups!" "Ah!" said he, "I have

made a mistake: those cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the

Lord, to whom I wished to direct the attention of the observer." And

he took up his brush, and blotted them from the canvas, that the

figure of Christ might be the chief object of attraction.

- - - Luke 10:40‑42 - Luke 10:40‑42

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Preaching - Church - Date Originally Filed - 9/1993.9

The problem with the typical morning worship service is that it

starts at 11 o'clock sharp and ends at 12 o'clock dull.

‑‑ \italic{Vance Havner

- - - 1 Cor 2:4‑5 - 1 Corinthians 2:4‑5 - - 1 Tim

5:17 - 1 Timothy 5:17 - - 2 Tim 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2 -

- James 1:22 - James 1:22

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Preaching - Earnestness - Date Originally Filed - 12/1993.18

A bishop ... asked David Garrick, the great actor, how it was

possible to take fiction and produce such a tremendous effect on his

audience.

Garrick replied, "Because I recite fiction as if it were truth, and

you preach truth as if it were fiction."

‑‑\italic{ Walter L. Lingle

- - - 1 Cor 9:16 - 1 Corinthians 9:16 - - 2 Tim

4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2 - - Jude 1:3 - Jude 1:3

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Preaching - Plainness of - Date Originally Filed - 12/1993.19

Author James C. Himes, writer of speeches for five Presidents,

wrote an award‑winning Churchill biography. His new book, \italic{The

Sir Winston Method, }is a must read for every pastor. This book offers

Sir Winston's five rules of oratory and leadership, which Himes

distilled from Churchill's private notes.

1) Begin strongly.

2) Stick to one theme.

3) Use simple language.

4) Paint word pictures.

5) End with emotion.

- - - Col 1:28 - Colossians 1:28 - - Col

4:6 - Colossians 4:6

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Preaching - Paul Harvey, 8‑18‑93. - Tony Manconi, vacationing in New Hampshire, visited a Nashua church

Date Originally Filed - 6/1994.16

Tony Manconi, vacationing in New Hampshire, visited a Nashua church

for the service. The pastor's sermon was very brief, but the pastor

explained. He said his family's new puppy got into his study the night

before and chewed up his notes. Afterward at the door, Tony asked,

"Pastor, are there any more puppies in that litter? I'd like to take

one to my pastor."

‑‑ Paul Harvey, 8‑18‑93.

- - - Prov 10:19 - Proverbs 10:19 - - Eccl

5:3 - Ecclesiastes 5:3

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Preaching - Positive/Neg.

Date Originally Filed - 3/1995.101

FEATURE: LARSON: Positive & Negative Preaching By Craig Brian Larson

If you want to reach the hearts of listeners, consider the heart of

the sermon.

I was coaching gymnasts at a local club for a few hours a week. As I

took beginners from basic skills like hip circles on the high bar to

more difficult tricks like giants, I repeatedly faced a decision

intrinsic to the art of coaching: when to say what the gymnast was

doing right and when to say what he was doing wrong. Both were

necessary. I couldn't help a beginner on high bar by ignoring that he

was about to swing forward with his hands in an undergrip position‑‑he

would peel in the front and fall on his head. "Don't ever do that!" I

warned. "You'll break your neck." But my ultimate goal was not just to

avoid injury; I wanted these boys to become excellent gymnasts

someday. So I encouraged them as they developed the fundamentals:

"Good stretch. That's the way to hollow your chest. Nice scoop in the

front." Preachers face the same decision weekly. One of our most

important decisions when crafting a sermon is whether to frame it

positively (what to do, what's right, our hope in God, the promises)

or negatively (what not to do, what's wrong, the sinful human

condition). The choice between positive or negative in the subject,

outline, illustrations, and application powerfully affects the tone of

a sermon. It changes the response of listeners. Surprisingly, it took

a friend editing a piece of my writing to make me sensitive to the

issue of positive and negative preaching. I found he had written a new

conclusion. "I didn't think this ended well on a negative note," he

explained, "so I've converted this to a positive conclusion." I liked

my original version, but as I considered the revised version, I had to

admit the positive conclusion was more effective. It left a hopeful

feeling, and that was appropriate. Thereafter in my preaching, I

became intentional about selecting positive or negative elements. And

I have seen the difference it makes.

SAME TEXT, DIFFERENT SERMONS Recently I preached from

- Malachi 1:6‑14 - Malachi 1:6‑14} and had to choose between

positive and negative approaches. - Malachi 1 - Malachi 1

scathingly indicts the priests and Israelites for what they were doing

wrong. The people were sacrificing to God their blind and lame

animals. The priests were sniffing at the altar, complaining that it

smelled and that the sacrifices were a burden. God angrily rebuked

them because by such "worship" they were showing him contempt rather

than honor. This Old Testament passage forcefully portrays a failing

that Christians can have‑‑we may dishonor God by giving him our worst

instead of our best. In writing the sermon, I had several decisions to

make. First, the subject could have been framed negatively: How people

show contempt for God. I had to develop that theme to be true to the

text, of course, yet I decided to do so under the umbrella of a

positive subject: How to honor God. If I had selected the negative

approach, my main points would have been: We show contempt for God

when we (1) respect a father or employer above God, (2) offer God

what we don't value, (3) worship God as if he were trivial.

In the positive approach, I wrote this outline: We honor God when we

(1) respect God above a father or employer, (2) give God what we

value, (3) worship God in a way that reflects his greatness. I

developed the points with contrast, explaining what the Israelites

were doing wrong and then illustrating positively how we can do what

is right. That one decision early on drastically changed the

application and emotional impact of the entire sermon. My goal is not

a simple fifty‑fifty split between positive and negative messages.

Rather, I want to know which approach I am using and why. Finding the

right balance of positive and negative preaching leads to healthy

Christians and churches, and to sermons that people want to hear.

WHEN TO BE NEGATIVE Both positive and negative elements are especially

effective at accomplishing certain objectives. First let's look at

four legitimate reasons to use a negative approach.

\* To show our need. Negative preaching takes sin seriously and leads

to repentance, thus indirectly bringing the positive results of joy,

peace, and life. It is in keeping with the model of Jesus, who clearly

honored God's hatred of sin by telling people what not to do. In his

sermon "God Is an Important Person," John Piper used a negative

approach to help listeners see their need to honor God: "I've been to

church‑growth seminars where God is not once mentioned. I've been to

lectures and talks on pastoral issues where he is not so much as

alluded to. I have read strategies for every kind of recovery under

the sun where God is not there. I have talked to students in

seminaries who tell me of manifold courses where God is peripheral at

best. I have recently read mission statements of major evangelical

organizations where God is not even mentioned. "I admit freely that

I'm on a crusade, and I have one message: God is an important person,

and he does not like being taken for granted." In this case, the

string of negative examples builds forcefully to show listeners their

need.

\* To seize interest. As journalists know‑‑and radio hosts like Rush

Limbaugh make a fortune on‑‑the negative gets more attention and

interest than the positive. In his sermon, "Power," Howard Hendricks

immediately gains a roomful of listeners with an introduction that

reminds us our culture is a mess: "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty

Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again. "What a perceptive parable

of our generation. We live in a society in which everything nailed

down is coming loose. Things that people said could not happen are

happening. Thoughtful though unregenerate people are asking, 'Where is

the glue to reassemble the disintegration and disarray?'... "Then we

usually seek someone to blame. I saw an intriguing piece of graffiti

in the city of Philadelphia some time ago. Scratched across the wall

were these words: HUMPTY Dumpty was pushed." After getting listeners'

attention with negative news, Hendricks goes on to show that only

Christ has the power to straighten out our culture.

\* To accentuate the positive. The positive feels even more so after

it has been contrasted with the negative. I appreciated this approach

in Leith Anderson's sermon "Can Jesus Trust Us?" Leith develops one

point negatively to help us grasp the positive. "Jesus ... trusted

John with his love. It is a most extraordinary thing to be described

as 'the one whom Jesus loved,' to be Jesus' best friend. It smacks of

something inappropriate, but the fact is, that's what their

relationship was. "I wonder what it would be like if such a thing were

done today. ... What would happen if in 1994 someone were identified

from all of Christendom as Jesus' best friend? Editors would be lined

up for an interview. That person would be on the cover of every

magazine. What do you think it would do to that person's life? Do you

think that person would write a book or cut a CD or go on the road on

a Best‑Friend‑of‑Jesus seminar? Wouldn't it have the high potential

of ruining that person's entire life? Wouldn't there be a temptation

to arrogance? Wouldn't there be the possibility of treating others in

an inappropriate and disparaging way? "And yet, didn't Jesus have as

much right to a best friend as any of us? If so, wasn't it critically

important that he choose someone whom he could trust to be his best

friend, with the confidence that that person would never misuse their

relationship?" By showing the negative way most people would handle

such a relationship with Jesus, Leith makes the apostle John's

response seem even more positive.

\* To warn of danger. If my son reaches toward a hot pan on the stove,

it's no time for me to tell him what great potential he has. "Don't

touch that pan!" is negative‑‑and necessary. In a dangerous world,

much of a responsible pastor's counsel is negative by necessity. In

his sermon "Take Your Best Shot," based on the crucifixion account,

Gordon MacDonald uses a negative approach to warn of evils we must

avoid. "Here are two major forms of evil erupting out of the human

experience. One is the crowd's irrational, angry, brutal resistance

against God, his purposes, and his people. The other is Pilate's

saying, 'I don't want to be identified with it.' In silence and

complicity, he backs off, washes his hands, and decides it would be

better to do nothing. "What bothers me most is my strong suspicion

that I could have been in that crowd. ... I can see the possibility of

being so defiant against God that I would have joined the crowd

saying, 'Crucify him!' self‑righteously justifying myself. I can also

see myself as Pontius Pilate saying, 'I don't want anything to do with

this,' and letting it happen." It's not positive, but it is powerful,

and it warns listeners of a danger to avoid.

WHEN TO BE POSITIVE At the core, however, New Testament preachers

proclaim good news, a message that brings hope, help, strength, and

joy. Jesus sums up the negative commands‑‑don't kill, steal, lie,

covet‑‑in positive terms: Love the Lord and love your neighbor. This

positive approach works best when you have the following objectives:

\* To show the goodness of Christ. The negative often focuses on what

people and Satan do. The positive focuses on God's answer, God's

glory, God's nature, God's salvation. Christ‑centered preaching

requires the positive. In his Easter sermon, "Victory for Us," Earl

Palmer shows by an analogy from the Winter Olympics that Christ won a

victory not only for himself, but also for us: "The high point of the

Olympics from a sentimental standpoint is those award ceremonies. When

the victors stand on those three pedestals, that's where everybody is

crying. The three flags are raised, and the national anthem of the

gold medalist is played. "Something else is signified there: not only

did [the various skaters] win, but their countries won, too. Not only

their countries but their parents. Notice how the cameras try to find

parents in the audience and the skaters' trainers and sometimes a

whole town in Wisconsin‑‑they all share in that victory. That's what

makes it great. They won not only for themselves, they won for us,

too. "In the Easter narratives of the New Testament, two great

affirmations are made. One affirmation is that Christ has won the

victory, and it's his alone. But the second theme, perhaps more subtly

portrayed but also present in all the Gospel narratives, is that we

too win a victory on Easter day. Our Lord's victory is his

vindication, but it's also our vindication." The positive approach

fits the theme of resurrection and life.

\* To bring encouragement and hope. God wants people to experience

hope, peace, acceptance, courage. Bad news makes people feel bad. So

while the negative is useful, it is rarely helpful to leave that as

the last word. In his sermon, "Listening to the Dark," Eugene Lowry

comforts listeners from the story of God speaking in a still, small

voice to the despairing Elijah: "In the midst of the darkness of the

cave finally came this voice. The voice came up close to the ear and

whispered. And the voice said, 'What are you doing here?' "That's one

of the most remarkable passages in all of Scripture. What do you mean,

'What are you doing here?' Do you notice what the voice did not say?

It did not say, 'What are you doing there?'‑‑as though God were

distant and aloof, looking on to the scene of the cave saying, 'What

are you doing there, Elijah? Why are you there?' We're not talking

there, we're talking here. "God is in the dark. In fact, God is bigger

than the dark. That's the promise. It is God's dark. God is the

Creator of the dark. And the promise is that God will be present. ...

And so with the confidence of children of the Most High God, revealed

in Christ, we may dare to endure the dark."

\* To build godliness. People need not only to stop sinning, but also

to start doing God's will. Preaching is both destructive and

constructive, tearing down what's wrong and building what's right.

Preaching positively encourages people to do what's right. In his

sermon "No Ordinary People," Wayne Brouwer affirms the right things

the people in his congregation are doing: "One of the great privileges

we have as pastors is to hear the things that people say to us when

they first join us for worship and for fellowship. Seven times this

past week alone, I've heard things like this: "'I didn't know what

Christianity was about until I came to First Church.' "'You people at

First Church made me feel welcome even when I didn't know what I

needed in my own soul.' "'You know,' said one person, 'I dropped out

of church for many years. I didn't think I needed it. And then my

friend brought me to First Church one day. Now I know what I've been

missing. I'd like to become a member.' "'People at First Church really

live their faith, don't they?' "That's what they're saying about us.

They're not really saying it about us. They're saying it about Christ

in us. ..." This positive approach surely made Brouwer's congregation

want to continue to accept newcomers.

\* To bring resolution. Sermons often have greater emotional impact

when we begin with the negative, show the need, and then bring

resolution by showing what God can do. In his sermon "The Love That

Compels," Stuart Briscoe shows the classic negative‑to‑positive form

of Christian preaching: the sin of man and the salvation of Christ.

"Human beings are not unlike volcanoes. Inside a volcano, the pressure

builds until the top blows with a dramatic eruption of lava. At other

times, cracks slowly and insidiously appear on the side of the

volcano, and the lava flows out in a different manner. ... "Inside

each of us, there's a thing called sin. No matter what way our volcano

was formed, whether we blow the top or leak streams of lava, it's the

lava inside that's the problem. "The ultimate disease is the problem,

and there's nothing human beings can do about it. "God demonstrated

his incredible love toward us when he took the initiative and

determined to do something about the sin problem. He invited Christ to

take our sins on himself and die our deaths. God would no longer count

our sins against us. He would reckon the sin to Christ and reckon to

us the righteousness of Christ. That's love." Notice that the negative

opening doesn't find resolution until the positive conclusion. HOW TO

CHANGE DIRECTION As we ponder the purpose of our sermon, we may sense

that we need to flip an element from positive to negative, or vice

versa. Instead of saying what not to do, we want to focus on what to

do. Or instead of illustrating what someone did right, we want to

illustrate what someone did wrong. Here's how to make the switch.

\* Switching from negative to positive. In a sermon on - James

1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4}, I wanted to encourage listeners to persevere

because it makes them mature in character. I suspected, though, that

many of my listeners weren't overly concerned about growing in

character. But I also assumed they don't want to crash and burn

morally. So I began by using a negative example, trying to motivate

them by showing them what to avoid: "No one wants to crash and burn.

"On September 8, 1992, Air Force master pilot Don Snelgrove was flying

over Turkey in an F‑16 fighter. He was on a four‑hour mission to

patrol the no‑fly zone established over northern Iraq to protect the

Kurds. "Nature calls even for master pilots. He pulled out a plastic

container, set his F‑16 on autopilot, and undid his lap belt. As he

adjusted his seat upward, the buckle on that lap belt wedged between

the seat and the control stick, pushing the stick to the right and

sending the plane into a spin. "As he struggled to regain control, the

plane plunged 33,000 feet. Finally at 2,000 feet altitude, he ejected

from the plane. Moments later the F‑16 struck a barren hillside and

burst into flames. Neither the pilot nor anyone on the ground was

injured. But I'll tell you what: there was one very embarrassed master

pilot. That F‑16 burning on a hillside in Turkey cost U.S. taxpayers

$18 million. "Even inadvertent mistakes are terribly embarrassing. How

much worse are the mistakes and failures that result from our

weaknesses, flaws, and sins. But we don't have to crash and burn

morally. We can develop godly character, and - James

1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4} shows us how." My goal was to use negative

examples to motivate. But I could have begun the sermon positively.

Perhaps the congregation already desired character and needed only

encouragement. In that case, I could have begun the sermon with a

positive example of someone who inspires us with his or her noble

character: "Inside each of us there is the desire to be a better

person. Many of us would love to be more like Dr. Elizabeth Holland, a

pediatrician from Memphis, Tennessee, who has served as a volunteer

doctor for World Vision. "Once she treated patients in the middle of

an African civil war, explains writer Robert Kerr. In 1985 she

performed one appendectomy in which 'the "operating room" was a mud

hut deep in the jungle of Zaire. The anesthetic was an animal

tranquilizer, which ran out in the middle of the operation. Outside,

MIG jets were dropping bombs.' Every time a bomb hit, dirt from the

mud hut fell down on them. She performed a virtual miracle considering

the circumstances, and her patient lived. "During the Angolan civil

war, Holland routinely saw 400 to 500 patients a day. '"I frequently

wrapped broken bones in magazines and used banana leafs for slings."

she said.' "Since food was in short supply, Holland ate a paste made

from ground cassava‑plant roots. '"It tasted like glue," said Dr.

Holland. "The first few days, I thought I would die. But then I got to

where it tasted pretty good. Sometimes when it rained we could get a

few leaves from the trees to cook in with it for variety."' "Across

the Angolan border was a minefield that often killed or injured

civilians; Holland would retrieve them. "'She said, "I learned if I

got my nose down at ground level and crawled along on my stomach, I

could see the mines. So I would make my way across, then throw the

injured person over my shoulder and carry them out the same way I had

come over."' "Maybe we will never be forced to persevere as Elizabeth

Holland has, but each of us can grow in character, and

- James 1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4} tells us how." Notice that this

example leaves a positive feeling in listeners; it assumes they want

the best and can develop. The negative approach focuses on what to

avoid; a positive approach focuses on what to attempt.

\* Switching from positive to negative. Familiar Bible passages can be

presented with a positive or negative approach, depending upon the

situation. Take, for example, the story of Peter trying to walk on

water. In his sermon "A Mind‑Expanding Faith," John Ortberg draws from

the text a positive main idea: "All of us are 'would‑be water

walkers.' And God did not intend for human beings, his children

created in his divine image, to go through life in a desperate attempt

to avoid failure. "The boat is safe, and the boat is secure, and the

boat is comfortable. The water is high, the waves are rough, the wind

is strong, and the night is dark. A storm is out there, and if you get

out of your boat, you may sink. "But if you don't get out of your

boat, you will never walk because if you want to walk on the water,

you have to get out of the boat. There is something, Someone, inside

us that tells us our lives are about something more than sitting in

the boat, something that wants to walk on the water, something that

calls us to leave the routine of comfortable existence and abandon

ourselves in this adventure of following Christ." But the same passage

could be used in a negative approach: to point out Peter's mistakes to

avoid. It might sound like this: "Peter was able to walk on water for

a few steps. But in the middle of that walk toward Christ, something

changed in his heart, and it caused him to sink. "Peter isn't the only

one who has taken bold steps of faith to follow Christ. Many in this

congregation are doing the same. In spite of great fear, you have

begun to teach a Bible class or host a cell group or volunteer at the

local hospital. Now that you've begun, you are beginning to see how

challenging this really is, and you're wavering. You feel like you're

going to sink. Let's see if we can learn from this account how to

avoid what caused Peter to sink." To change from positive to negative,

look for what a text shows not to do.

THE FINE ART OF DISCIPLING My two oldest sons competed on their high

school gymnastics team last year. As the postseason meets began,

Aaron, who was a senior, had the goal of qualifying for state. Ben, a

sophomore, wanted to make it to sectionals. In regionals both Aaron

and Ben had poor meets, missing several routines. When they got in the

car afterward, they were down in the dumps‑‑even though they had both

(barely) made the cut for sectionals. Probably they were a little

embarrassed, not knowing how I would react (I competed in gymnastics

in high school and college). Although after some meets, I have pointed

out flaws in their technique, this time I spent the next thirty

minutes in the car telling them the bright spots, the specific things

they had done well: "Aaron, that was the best double you've ever done

off high bar. You were above the bar." "Ben, your plunge on parallel

bars was unbelievable. You must have held it for five seconds!" By the

time we got home, they were smiling and talking about how much better

they would do in the next meet. Their confidence had returned. One

week later, Ben hit his routines as well as he had all year, and Aaron

reached the goal that he had hoped for all year: he qualified for

state. We coach‑‑and disciple‑‑not only the body but the heart. The

choice between positive and negative in our sermons is a critical part

of training Christians who have the heart of champions.

HOW BALANCED IS YOUR PREACHING? Ways you can measure We assume our

preaching is balanced. After all, we preach what we feel God is

leading us to preach. But our personality, which may have a negative

or positive bias, enters strongly into our sermonizing, so without

knowing it we can easily become a lopsided preacher. Here are a few

signals that our sermons may be more imbalanced than we assume.

POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMBALANCE ‑‑Your congregation is critical (and you

have been their pastor for more than four years). Conversations center

on what's wrong with the world, people, the denomination, the church.

‑‑You don't feel as though you're really preaching until you are

telling people how they need to change. ‑‑A common compliment you

receive on your preaching is "You really nailed us today, Pastor."

‑‑You preach frequently from the Old Testament prophets or hard

sayings of Jesus.

POSSIBLE POSITIVE IMBALANCE ‑‑You apologize when you point out sin.

‑‑You don't want any sermon to be "a downer." ‑‑You feel as though you

haven't really preached until people are feeling encouraged. ‑‑A

common compliment you receive is you're sensitive to the hurting.

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Preaching - CT - Date Originally Filed - 9/1995.101

Preaching

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outline, illustrations, and application powerfully affects the tone of

a sermon. It changes the response of listeners. Surprisingly, it took

a friend editing a piece of my writing to make me sensitive to the

issue of positive and negative preaching. I found he had written a new

conclusion. "I didn't think this ended well on a negative note," he

explained, "so I've converted this to a positive conclusion." I liked

my original version, but as I considered the revised version, I had to

admit the positive conclusion was more effective. It left a hopeful

feeling, and that was appropriate. Thereafter in my preaching, I

became intentional about selecting positive or negative elements. And

I have seen the difference it makes.

SAME TEXT, DIFFERENT SERMONS

Recently I preached from - Malachi 1:6‑14 - Malachi 1:6‑14

and had to choose between positive and negative approaches.

- Malachi 1 - Malachi 1} scathingly indicts the priests and

Israelites for what they were doing wrong. The people were sacrificing

to God their blind and lame animals. The priests were sniffing at the

altar, complaining that it smelled and that the sacrifices were a

burden. God angrily rebuked them because by such "worship" they were

showing him contempt rather than honor. This Old Testament passage

forcefully portrays a failing that Christians can have‑‑we may

dishonor God by giving him our worst instead of our best. In writing

the sermon, I had several decisions to make. First, the subject could

have been framed negatively: How people show contempt for God. I had

to develop that theme to be true to the text, of course, yet I decided

to do so under the umbrella of a positive subject: How to honor God.

If I had selected the negative approach, my main points would have

been: We show contempt for God when we (1) respect a father or

employer above God, (2) offer God what we don't value, (3) worship God

as if he were trivial. In the positive approach, I wrote this outline:

We honor God when we (1) respect God above a father or employer, (2)

give God what we value, (3) worship God in a way that reflects his

greatness. I developed the points with contrast, explaining what the

Israelites were doing wrong and then illustrating positively how we

can do what is right. That one decision early on drastically changed

the application and emotional impact of the entire sermon. My goal is

not a simple fifty‑fifty split between positive and negative messages.

Rather, I want to know which approach I am using and why. Finding the

right balance of positive and negative preaching leads to healthy

Christians and churches, and to sermons that people want to hear.

WHEN TO BE NEGATIVE

Both positive and negative elements are especially effective at

accomplishing certain objectives. First let's look at four legitimate

reasons to use a negative approach. \* To show our need. Negative

preaching takes sin seriously and leads to repentance, thus indirectly

bringing the positive results of joy, peace, and life. It is in

keeping with the model of Jesus, who clearly honored God's hatred of

sin by telling people what not to do. In his sermon "God Is an

Important Person," John Piper used a negative approach to help

listeners see their need to honor God: "I've been to church‑growth

seminars where God is not once mentioned. I've been to lectures and

talks on pastoral issues where he is not so much as alluded to. I have

read strategies for every kind of recovery under the sun where God is

not there. I have talked to students in seminaries who tell me of

manifold courses where God is peripheral at best. I have recently read

mission statements of major evangelical organizations where God is not

even mentioned. "I admit freely that I'm on a crusade, and I have one

message: God is an important person, and he does not like being taken

for granted." In this case, the string of negative examples builds

forcefully to show listeners their need. \* To seize interest. As

journalists know‑‑and radio hosts like Rush Limbaugh make a fortune

on‑‑the negative gets more attention and interest than the positive.

In his sermon, "Power," Howard Hendricks immediately gains a roomful

of listeners with an introduction that reminds us our culture is a

mess: "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men Couldn't put Humpty

Dumpty together again. "What a perceptive parable of our generation.

We live in a society in which everything nailed down is coming loose.

Things that people said could not happen are happening. Thoughtful

though unregenerate people are asking, 'Where is the glue to

reassemble the disintegration and disarray?'... "Then we usually seek

someone to blame. I saw an intriguing piece of graffiti in the city of

Philadelphia some time ago. Scratched across the wall were these

words: HUMPTY Dumpty was pushed." After getting listeners' attention

with negative news, Hendricks goes on to show that only Christ has the

power to straighten out our culture. \* To accentuate the positive. The

positive feels even more so after it has been contrasted with the

negative. I appreciated this approach in Leith Anderson's sermon "Can

Jesus Trust Us?" Leith develops one point negatively to help us grasp

the positive. "Jesus ... trusted John with his love. It is a most

extraordinary thing to be described as 'the one whom Jesus loved,' to

be Jesus' best friend. It smacks of something inappropriate, but the

fact is, that's what their relationship was. "I wonder what it would

be like if such a thing were done today. ... What would happen if in

1994 someone were identified from all of Christendom as Jesus' best

friend? Editors would be lined up for an interview. That person would

be on the cover of every magazine. What do you think it would do to

that person's life? Do you think that person would write a book or cut

a CD or go on the road on a Best‑Friend‑of‑Jesus seminar? Wouldn't it

have the high potential of ruining that person's entire life? Wouldn't

there be a temptation to arrogance? Wouldn't there be the possibility

of treating others in an inappropriate and disparaging way? "And yet,

didn't Jesus have as much right to a best friend as any of us? If so,

wasn't it critically important that he choose someone whom he could

trust to be his best friend, with the confidence that that person

would never misuse their relationship?" By showing the negative way

most people would handle such a relationship with Jesus, Leith makes

the apostle John's response seem even more positive. \* To warn of

danger. If my son reaches toward a hot pan on the stove, it's no time

for me to tell him what great potential he has. "Don't touch that

pan!" is negative‑‑and necessary. In a dangerous world, much of a

responsible pastor's counsel is negative by necessity. In his sermon

"Take Your Best Shot," based on the crucifixion account, Gordon

MacDonald uses a negative approach to warn of evils we must avoid.

"Here are two major forms of evil erupting out of the human

experience. One is the crowd's irrational, angry, brutal resistance

against God, his purposes, and his people. The other is Pilate's

saying, 'I don't want to be identified with it.' In silence and

complicity, he backs off, washes his hands, and decides it would be

better to do nothing. "What bothers me most is my strong suspicion

that I could have been in that crowd. ... I can see the possibility of

being so defiant against God that I would have joined the crowd

saying, 'Crucify him!' self‑righteously justifying myself. I can also

see myself as Pontius Pilate saying, 'I don't want anything to do with

this,' and letting it happen." It's not positive, but it is powerful,

and it warns listeners of a danger to avoid.

WHEN TO BE POSITIVE

At the core, however, New Testament preachers proclaim good news, a

message that brings hope, help, strength, and joy. Jesus sums up the

negative commands‑‑don't kill, steal, lie, covet‑‑in positive terms:

Love the Lord and love your neighbor. This positive approach works

best when you have the following objectives: \* To show the goodness of

Christ. The negative often focuses on what people and Satan do. The

positive focuses on God's answer, God's glory, God's nature, God's

salvation. Christ‑centered preaching requires the positive. In his

Easter sermon, "Victory for Us," Earl Palmer shows by an analogy from

the Winter Olympics that Christ won a victory not only for himself,

but also for us: "The high point of the Olympics from a sentimental

standpoint is those award ceremonies. When the victors stand on those

three pedestals, that's where everybody is crying. The three flags are

raised, and the national anthem of the gold medalist is played.

"Something else is signified there: not only did [the various skaters]

win, but their countries won, too. Not only their countries but their

parents. Notice how the cameras try to find parents in the audience

and the skaters' trainers and sometimes a whole town in

Wisconsin‑‑they all share in that victory. That's what makes it great.

They won not only for themselves, they won for us, too. "In the Easter

narratives of the New Testament, two great affirmations are made. One

affirmation is that Christ has won the victory, and it's his alone.

But the second theme, perhaps more subtly portrayed but also present

in all the Gospel narratives, is that we too win a victory on Easter

day. Our Lord's victory is his vindication, but it's also our

vindication." The positive approach fits the theme of resurrection and

life. \* To bring encouragement and hope. God wants people to

experience hope, peace, acceptance, courage. Bad news makes people

feel bad. So while the negative is useful, it is rarely helpful to

leave that as the last word. In his sermon, "Listening to the Dark,"

Eugene Lowry comforts listeners from the story of God speaking in a

still, small voice to the despairing Elijah: "In the midst of the

darkness of the cave finally came this voice. The voice came up close

to the ear and whispered. And the voice said, 'What are you doing

here?' "That's one of the most remarkable passages in all of

Scripture. What do you mean, 'What are you doing here?' Do you notice

what the voice did not say? It did not say, 'What are you doing

there?'‑‑as though God were distant and aloof, looking on to the scene

of the cave saying, 'What are you doing there, Elijah? Why are you

there?' We're not talking there, we're talking here. "God is in the

dark. In fact, God is bigger than the dark. That's the promise. It is

God's dark. God is the Creator of the dark. And the promise is that

God will be present. ... And so with the confidence of children of the

Most High God, revealed in Christ, we may dare to endure the dark." \*

To build godliness. People need not only to stop sinning, but also to

start doing God's will. Preaching is both destructive and

constructive, tearing down what's wrong and building what's right.

Preaching positively encourages people to do what's right. In his

sermon "No Ordinary People," Wayne Brouwer affirms the right things

the people in his congregation are doing: "One of the great privileges

we have as pastors is to hear the things that people say to us when

they first join us for worship and for fellowship. Seven times this

past week alone, I've heard things like this: "'I didn't know what

Christianity was about until I came to First Church.' "'You people at

First Church made me feel welcome even when I didn't know what I

needed in my own soul.' "'You know,' said one person, 'I dropped out

of church for many years. I didn't think I needed it. And then my

friend brought me to First Church one day. Now I know what I've been

missing. I'd like to become a member.' "'People at First Church really

live their faith, don't they?' "That's what they're saying about us.

They're not really saying it about us. They're saying it about Christ

in us. ..." This positive approach surely made Brouwer's congregation

want to continue to accept newcomers. \* To bring resolution. Sermons

often have greater emotional impact when we begin with the negative,

show the need, and then bring resolution by showing what God can do.

In his sermon "The Love That Compels," Stuart Briscoe shows the

classic negative‑to‑positive form of Christian preaching: the sin of

man and the salvation of Christ. "Human beings are not unlike

volcanoes. Inside a volcano, the pressure builds until the top blows

with a dramatic eruption of lava. At other times, cracks slowly and

insidiously appear on the side of the volcano, and the lava flows out

in a different manner. ... "Inside each of us, there's a thing called

sin. No matter what way our volcano was formed, whether we blow the

top or leak streams of lava, it's the lava inside that's the problem.

"The ultimate disease is the problem, and there's nothing human beings

can do about it. "God demonstrated his incredible love toward us when

he took the initiative and determined to do something about the sin

problem. He invited Christ to take our sins on himself and die our

deaths. God would no longer count our sins against us. He would reckon

the sin to Christ and reckon to us the righteousness of Christ. That's

love." Notice that the negative opening doesn't find resolution until

the positive conclusion. HOW TO CHANGE DIRECTION As we ponder the

purpose of our sermon, we may sense that we need to flip an element

from positive to negative, or vice versa. Instead of saying what not

to do, we want to focus on what to do. Or instead of illustrating what

someone did right, we want to illustrate what someone did wrong.

Here's how to make the switch. \* Switching from negative to positive.

In a sermon on - James 1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4}, I wanted to

encourage listeners to persevere because it makes them mature in

character. I suspected, though, that many of my listeners weren't

overly concerned about growing in character. But I also assumed they

don't want to crash and burn morally. So I began by using a negative

example, trying to motivate them by showing them what to avoid: "No

one wants to crash and burn. "On September 8, 1992, Air Force master

pilot Don Snelgrove was flying over Turkey in an F‑16 fighter. He was

on a four‑hour mission to patrol the no‑fly zone established over

northern Iraq to protect the Kurds. "Nature calls even for master

pilots. He pulled out a plastic container, set his F‑16 on autopilot,

and undid his lap belt. As he adjusted his seat upward, the buckle on

that lap belt wedged between the seat and the control stick, pushing

the stick to the right and sending the plane into a spin. "As he

struggled to regain control, the plane plunged 33,000 feet. Finally at

2,000 feet altitude, he ejected from the plane. Moments later the F‑16

struck a barren hillside and burst into flames. Neither the pilot nor

anyone on the ground was injured. But I'll tell you what: there was

one very embarrassed master pilot. That F‑16 burning on a hillside in

Turkey cost U.S. taxpayers $18 million. "Even inadvertent mistakes are

terribly embarrassing. How much worse are the mistakes and failures

that result from our weaknesses, flaws, and sins. But we don't have to

crash and burn morally. We can develop godly character, and

- James 1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4} shows us how." My goal was to use

negative examples to motivate. But I could have begun the sermon

positively. Perhaps the congregation already desired character and

needed only encouragement. In that case, I could have begun the sermon

with a positive example of someone who inspires us with his or her

noble character: "Inside each of us there is the desire to be a better

person. Many of us would love to be more like Dr. Elizabeth Holland, a

pediatrician from Memphis, Tennessee, who has served as a volunteer

doctor for World Vision. "Once she treated patients in the middle of

an African civil war, explains writer Robert Kerr. In 1985 she

performed one appendectomy in which 'the "operating room" was a mud

hut deep in the jungle of Zaire. The anesthetic was an animal

tranquilizer, which ran out in the middle of the operation. Outside,

MIG jets were dropping bombs.' Every time a bomb hit, dirt from the

mud hut fell down on them. She performed a virtual miracle considering

the circumstances, and her patient lived. "During the Angolan civil

war, Holland routinely saw 400 to 500 patients a day. '"I frequently

wrapped broken bones in magazines and used banana leafs for slings."

she said.' "Since food was in short supply, Holland ate a paste made

from ground cassava‑plant roots. '"It tasted like glue," said Dr.

Holland. "The first few days, I thought I would die. But then I got to

where it tasted pretty good. Sometimes when it rained we could get a

few leaves from the trees to cook in with it for variety."' "Across

the Angolan border was a minefield that often killed or injured

civilians; Holland would retrieve them. "'She said, "I learned if I

got my nose down at ground level and crawled along on my stomach, I

could see the mines. So I would make my way across, then throw the

injured person over my shoulder and carry them out the same way I had

come over."' "Maybe we will never be forced to persevere as Elizabeth

Holland has, but each of us can grow in character, and

- James 1:2‑4 - James 1:2‑4} tells us how." Notice that this

example leaves a positive feeling in listeners; it assumes they want

the best and can develop. The negative approach focuses on what to

avoid; a positive approach focuses on what to attempt. \* Switching

from positive to negative. Familiar Bible passages can be presented

with a positive or negative approach, depending upon the situation.

Take, for example, the story of Peter trying to walk on water. In his

sermon "A Mind‑Expanding Faith," John Ortberg draws from the text a

positive main idea: "All of us are 'would‑be water walkers.' And God

did not intend for human beings, his children created in his divine

image, to go through life in a desperate attempt to avoid failure.

"The boat is safe, and the boat is secure, and the boat is

comfortable. The water is high, the waves are rough, the wind is

strong, and the night is dark. A storm is out there, and if you get

out of your boat, you may sink. "But if you don't get out of your

boat, you will never walk because if you want to walk on the water,

you have to get out of the boat. There is something, Someone, inside

us that tells us our lives are about something more than sitting in

the boat, something that wants to walk on the water, something that

calls us to leave the routine of comfortable existence and abandon

ourselves in this adventure of following Christ." But the same passage

could be used in a negative approach: to point out Peter's mistakes to

avoid. It might sound like this: "Peter was able to walk on water for

a few steps. But in the middle of that walk toward Christ, something

changed in his heart, and it caused him to sink. "Peter isn't the only

one who has taken bold steps of faith to follow Christ. Many in this

congregation are doing the same. In spite of great fear, you have

begun to teach a Bible class or host a cell group or volunteer at the

local hospital. Now that you've begun, you are beginning to see how

challenging this really is, and you're wavering. You feel like you're

going to sink. Let's see if we can learn from this account how to

avoid what caused Peter to sink." To change from positive to negative,

look for what a text shows not to do.

THE FINE ART OF DISCIPLING

My two oldest sons competed on their high school gymnastics team last

year. As the postseason meets began, Aaron, who was a senior, had the

goal of qualifying for state. Ben, a sophomore, wanted to make it to

sectionals. In regionals both Aaron and Ben had poor meets, missing

several routines. When they got in the car afterward, they were down

in the dumps‑‑even though they had both (barely) made the cut for

sectionals. Probably they were a little embarrassed, not knowing how I

would react (I competed in gymnastics in high school and college).

Although after some meets, I have pointed out flaws in their

technique, this time I spent the next thirty minutes in the car

telling them the bright spots, the specific things they had done well:

"Aaron, that was the best double you've ever done off high bar. You

were above the bar." "Ben, your plunge on parallel bars was

unbelievable. You must have held it for five seconds!" By the time we

got home, they were smiling and talking about how much better they

would do in the next meet. Their confidence had returned. One week

later, Ben hit his routines as well as he had all year, and Aaron

reached the goal that he had hoped for all year: he qualified for

state. We coach‑‑and disciple‑‑not only the body but the heart. The

choice between positive and negative in our sermons is a critical part

of training Christians who have the heart of champions.

HOW BALANCED IS YOUR PREACHING? Ways you can measure We assume our

preaching is balanced. After all, we preach what we feel God is

leading us to preach. But our personality, which may have a negative

or positive bias, enters strongly into our sermonizing, so without

knowing it we can easily become a lopsided preacher. Here are a few

signals that our sermons may be more imbalanced than we assume.

POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMBALANCE

‑‑Your congregation is critical (and you have been their pastor for

more than four years). Conversations center on what's wrong with the

world, people, the denomination, the church. ‑‑You don't feel as

though you're really preaching until you are telling people how they

need to change. ‑‑A common compliment you receive on your preaching is

"You really nailed us today, Pastor."

‑‑You preach frequently from the Old Testament prophets or hard

sayings of Jesus.

POSSIBLE POSITIVE IMBALANCE

‑‑You apologize when you point out sin.

‑‑You don't want any sermon to be "a downer."

‑‑You feel as though you haven't really preached until people are

feeling encouraged.

‑‑A common compliment you receive is you're sensitive to the hurting.

Craig Brian Larson is a contributing editor of LEADERSHIP

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Preaching - Once you get people laughing,

Franklin Planner - Date Originally Filed - 1/1998.101

Once you get people laughing, they're listening and you can tell them

almost anything ‑Herbert Gardner (Franklin Planner ‑ January 6, 1998)

File 88, 121

Humor

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Preaching - Saying the wrong thing

Date Originally Filed - 1/1998.101

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Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the

world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that

but not with all those flies and death and stuff. ‑‑ Mariah Carey

\*

Question: If you could live forever, would you and why

Answer: I would not live forever, because we should not live

forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would

live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not

live forever. ‑‑ Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss Universe contest

\*

Researchers have discovered that chocolate produces some of the

same reactions in the brain as marijuana...The researchers also

discovered other similarities between the two, but can't remember what

they are. ‑‑Matt Lauer on NBC's Today show, August 22

\*

Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of

your life. ‑‑ Brooke Shields, during an interview to become

spokesperson for a federal anti‑smoking campaign

\*

Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates

in the country. ‑‑ Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, DC

\*

The streets are safe in Philadelphia. It's only the people who make

them unsafe. ‑‑ Frank Rizzo, ex‑police chief and mayor of Philadelphia

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Preaching - To be boring

Date Originally Filed - 3/1998.101

The way to become boring is to say everything ‑‑Voltaire (Franklin

Planner, March 5, 1998.)

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Preaching - Poor Sermon Illustration - Gun

Date Originally Filed - 11/1998.101

Poor Sermon Illustrations

A youth pastor in FL, Melvyn Nurse, 35, wanted to illustrate the

danger of drug use and violence by comparing it to Russian Roulette.

Inserting a blank cartridge into a revolver during a sermon before 250

people, he proceeded to spin the cylinder and fire it above his heard

at each point made in his outline. At the end, the blank cartridge

flew apart and shattered his skull (CCI/USA's Executive monthly, Vol.

13, No. 11).

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Preaching - 10 Commandments of Communication by: Dr. John Maxwell \*\*\*

Date Originally Filed - 2/1999.101

The Ten Commandments of Communication by: Dr. John Maxwell

Can you hear it? If not, you must be able to see it... There's an

explosion currently taking place in American society, and its effects

are all around us. Television. Radio. Books. Telemarketing. Video

conferencing. Magazines. Newspapers. Online services. Faxes. Overnight

delivery.

For the past 50 years, communication has been growing so explosively

that it seems almost impossible to keep up. In fact, Kaiser Aluminum

News reports that since 1955, fifty percent of the cost of running the

American economy has been related to communication.

And there you are ‑‑ a leader caught in the midst of this

communication cyclone. No matter who your followers are, you recognize

that you must find a way to communicate with them. And not just give

information or talk "at" them; you need to find a way to get through

to them over the din of everything else that vies for their attention.

But how do you do that?

The answer lies not so much in what you say, but in how you say it.

You've got to connect if you want to achieve true communication ‑‑ the

kind that reaches the heart and mind and elicits a response.

In the years I've been speaking to people, whether preaching the

Gospel or teaching leadership principles, I've learned some truths

about effective communication. And I've narrowed them down to ten

"commandments." Over the years, they've helped me improve my ability

to connect, and I believe they can do the same for you.

1. BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU SAY.

It's hard to get excited about someone else's brainstorm. Only when

you "own" an idea can you express a sense of urgency and passion about

it. And while that's easy when an idea begins with you, it's more of a

challenge with pieces of information that get passed down for you to

share with your people. That's when you must find something in the

message that is valuable to you and them, and then express it with

enthusiasm.

2. BELIEVE IN THE PEOPLE TO WHOM YOU SPEAK.

All great communicators have one thing in common: They expect a lot of

their audience. They believe their message has value to their

listeners, and they trust people to understand and apply it to their

lives or work. Because of this attitude, when they're done speaking,

the people come away saying, "This speaker really has my interests at

heart and wants me to be all I can be."

If you're going to reach people you have to believe in them.

3. LIVE WHAT YOU SAY.

In school, many of us were taught that content was the key to

effective communication. But it's not. What is most important is

credibility. When I began preaching in my first church, I often spoke

on evangelism because I believed it was important. But those messages

failed to produce any lasting results in the people's hearts. Why?

Because at the time, I was not doing the work of an evangelist. It was

only after I made a personal commitment to winning souls that I could

effectively preach on evangelism.

If you can't own it, don't quote it. If you don't live it, it won't

fly.

4. KNOW WHEN TO SAY IT.

In many cases, timing really is everything. If you don't take it into

account, even the most inspired or important message can fail to reach

your listeners.

For example, during times when people feel insecure (such as when

layoffs have been taking place within the community), "surprise"

messages are rarely received well. And calls to deep commitment in

times of low morale may not work.

With any message, ask yourself what response you're trying to elicit

from your audience. Then look at the environment, attitudes, and

circumstances the people are currently facing to determine whether you

can expect to get that response right now. If you conclude that the

timing is bad, wait. As circumstances and feelings change, your people

will be more receptive, and you'll have a better chance of succeeding.

5. KNOW HOW TO SAY IT.

Creativity can often make the difference between functional and

memorable communication. Use all the tools you can to make your

message interesting and memorable. Choices include plays on words,

acrostics, humor, stories, etc. And avoid being too predictable. If

people always know what you are about to say or how you will say it,

they will stop listening.

6. KNOW WHY TO SAY IT.

One of my college professors used to tell us, "Preach for a verdict."

In other words, don't speak if you don't know what you want to have

happen when you're done. Always base your announcement or message on

what you want your audience to do, rather than on what you want them

to know. Then make sure to tell them what you want them to do next.

You'd be surprised by how many leaders expect their people to apply

what they've learned without ever being asked to do it.

7. HAVE FUN SAYING IT.

Don't take yourself too seriously. We are all cracked pots ‑‑ and the

bigger the cracks, the more God's light shines through. Make your

communication fun and relaxed. And don't be afraid to use humor.

8. SHOW IT AS YOU SAY IT.

People are very visual. Your listeners are more likely to respond when

they can "see" what you're trying to tell them. Use body language and

hand gestures. Write on a board or overhead screen. Paint word

pictures and use descriptive language to bring what you say to life.

Any time you can conjure an image in people's minds, your ability to

get through to them increases dramatically.

9. SAY IT SO PEOPLE CAN OWN IT.

There's no reason for people to respond to a message that doesn't seem

to be directed at them. To foster ownership in your listeners, you

must include them in your communication.

Speak specifically, not hypothetically. Spell out how your message

affects them personally. If people know what's really at stake, they

respond at a much higher level of commitment.

10. SAY IT SO PEOPLE WILL DO IT.

The bottom line for any communication is action. So make sure that a

call for action is a part of any message you share. As you make the

call, communicate the benefits your audience will receive from

following through. Give them the steps they'll need to respond. And

finally, make sure that they are capable of doing what you're calling

them to do.

In today's world, competition for the hearts and minds of people is

intense. Without a strategy, you're facing a tough battle. But by

applying these "ten commandments" to your communication, I believe you

can increase your effectiveness and connect with them in a positive

way.

http://www.gospelcom.net/injoy/newsletters/leadership‑wired/97/10/mFailure

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Preaching - Make Every Sermon Count by Donald S. Whitney

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How to Make Every Sermon Count

Preparing your heart and mind to hear God's Word

by Donald S. Whitney

Its Sunday morning. Your pastor strides to the pulpit. During the

sermon, youll invest 25 to 45 minutes of your time listening to what

he has to say. How can you benefit most from this important

investment? What can you do to get the most out of the sermon?

- James 1:21‑22 - James 1:21‑22} teaches us what to do before,

during, and after hearing Gods Word: Therefore putting aside all

filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the

word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves

doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves

(NASB).

Heart Preparation

We need to prepare our hearts before we can hear God speak through a

sermon. James phrase filthiness and all that remains of wickedness

refers generally to any type of sin. When James writes of putting

[it] aside, he uses a term that describes taking off an old, dirty

coat and laying it aside. In other words, he counsels, the best way to

prepare to hear from a holy God is to put away anything in your life

that is unholy.

The Greek word translated in verse 21 as wickedness is used outside

the New Testament for the wax that forms in the ear. Sin is like that.

It can block our spiritual ears so that we cannot hear what God is

saying to us. The Lord may be speaking clearly through the sermon, and

yet we may not hear Him.

Putting aside sin requires us to examine our hearts, looking for

anything in our lives that would hamper our spiritual hearing. Before

you go to church, carve out a few minutes to pray for your ability to

receive what you hear. Ask God to search your heart. He may place His

finger on a particular sin. If so, confess it, and ask the Lord not to

let it impede your intake of truth. Pray that God would help you

overcome common Sunday morning problems that interfere with listening

to the sermon, such as anger toward a family member who made you late.

Any sin that comes to mind should prompt confession and repentance in

order to better hear Gods pure and holy Word.

Listening with Humility

The second half of verse 21 describes our responsibility during a

sermon: in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save

your souls. James is writing to those in whom the Word of God has

already been implanted by God (see v. 18), that is, to believers in

Christ. So when he speaks of the saving of the soul, James is

referring to the ongoing process of sanctificationbecoming more like

Christin each believers life.

What does it mean to receive the Word in humility? To listen with

humility, we must remember that we are coming to hear the Word of God,

not just a pastors sermon. Often, we may get hung up on superficial

things that distract us. Perhaps we dont like a certain pastors

preaching style or some annoying mannerism. We must not let such

personal issues derail our attention to the preaching of Gods Word.

When we listen with humility, were more alert for the message of God

than for flaws in the messenger or his delivery. Not every word the

preacher speaks will be divinely inspired by God. But if your pastors

sermons are based on the Bible, then you are hearing the Word of God.

God is speaking, and He is speaking to you.

To receive the Word of God in humility also means to think about how

it applies to us individually. With some issues, we may be tempted to

think that the sermon doesnt have much to do with us. We may even

pridefully think, This sermon is for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not me. But we need

to humbly acknowledge that every sermon is for each of us. This is

even true for topics and passages weve heard preached many times and

assume that we know well. Instead of thinking, I know this already, we

need to ask the Lord to give us deeper insight and fresh ideas about

how to apply familiar truths to our lives. Because every verse used in

the sermon was inspired by God (see - 2 Tim. 3:16 - 2 Timothy

3:16}), we should assume that there is some way to apply it to our

lives.

The Apostle Paul was exhilarated by how the people of Thessalonica

responded to his preaching. And we also thank God continually

because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us,

you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the

word of God, which is at work in you who believe ( - 1 Thess.

2:13 - 1 Thessalonians 2:13}). These people heard what Paul preached

and said to themselves, God is speaking to me.

The gospel is described as a seed that grows when its in a receptive

environment. Listening with humility means allowing Gods Word to take

root in your soul and life. Jesus used this analogy in the parable of

the soils (see - Lk. 8:4‑15 - Luke 8:4‑15}). The Word of God

that is sown during a sermon will only flourish in a heart with

receptive soil. Unfortunately, the hearts of many who hear the Word

are hard packed, and the Word finds no receptivity. With others, the

thorns of earthly concerns will choke out the fruitfulness of the

Word. But some, those described as good soil, will receive the Word,

and an abundant harvest of fruit will result. The way we receive the

Word of God as it is preached indicates the kind of soil we are.

Applying what you hear

James then exhorts his readers to respond obediently to the Word they

ve humbly received. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not

merely hearers who delude themselves ( - Jas. 1:22,

NASB) - James 1:22 NASB}. Our responsibility after the sermon is to

intentionally apply Gods Word. While a good preacher demonstrates the

application of his sermon text to various kinds of hearers, it is

impossible for him to personalize the application for everyone.

Ultimately, we must take the initiative to apply what we hear and thus

prove [ourselves] doers of the word, and not merely hearers.

Make it your goal to determine at least one response to every

scripturally sound sermon you hear. The most appropriate response to

many sermons may be confession, praise, or thanksgiving. Maybe a

sermon has challenged what you believe about a particular verse or

doctrine, and you need to think about and study the issue further on

your own. Perhaps you were convicted to reconcile a relationship,

confront someone whos wronged you, or confess a sin against an

individual. Perhaps there is a habit to break or to start. If no

application of the message seems obvious, think about how the sermon

might apply in different areas of your life, such as home, work,

church, school, finances, etc.

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Tips for Better Concentration

Get enough sleep.

Its difficult to concentrate on a sermon if you havent had enough

sleep. Very few things will help you pay attention better than a good

nights sleep on Saturday. How you spend Saturday night and early

Sunday morning has a great deal to do with how much youll get out of

the sermon.

Take notes.

Taking notes focuses your concentration on the preachers message.

Even if you dont intend to file the notes for future reference,

writing down key thoughts will help you pay attention. Writing down

important ideas burns them into your brain much more effectively than

merely hearing them. You can enhance your note taking by recording

your own thoughts, questions, applications, and related Scriptures as

you listen. This helps make the sermon an interactive, relational

experience instead of simply a passive one.

Sit near the front.

Sitting close to the front minimizes distractions. The less distance

between you and the preacher, the fewer the diversions. Youll see

fewer people talking and moving. Youll be less distracted by other

peoples idiosyncrasies, clothing, babies looking at you, or parents

struggling to make their children pay attention.

Donald S. Whitney

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Ezekiel spoke about the importance of intentionally applying the

Word. God warned Ezekiel that some who claim to be His people and want

to hear His Word would respond to the prophets message by saying to

each other,

Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord. My people

come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your

words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they

express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed,

to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a

beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words

but do not put them into practice. Ezk. 33:30‑33

God was displeased with these people because, despite hearing the

words of His spokesman, they didnt put them into practice. They did

not consider Gods words any more important than an entertainers

(one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an

instrument well). Hearing Gods Word without doing it is dangerous.

According to - Jas. 1:22 - James 1:22}, it is a delusion to

think that mere exposure to the truth, and perhaps admiration of it,

is sufficient. In - verse 25 - James 1:25}, James emphasizes

that it is not the man who forgets what he has heard, but he who does

it that will be blessed.

Do you have ears to hear?

If you had a weekly meeting with your boss and coworkers to discuss

priorities for the coming week, you would do your part to get ready

for the meeting. During the meeting, you would pay attention to what

your boss had to say. When the meeting was finished, you would go back

over your notes and action items and get to work on your assignments.

Or imagine that you have a weekly appointment with a golf or tennis

pro, or maybe a music lesson. During the week, you would practice

diligently to master the skills your instructor taught you in your

last session. During your half hour with the instructor, you would

soak in everything your teacher told you. From then on, you would try

to apply all you had heard.

Do you take the preaching of the Wordthe Word of God Almighty, the

One who created us and who determines our eternal destinyas seriously

as a weekly appointment with a boss, a coach, a counselor, or a

customer? We should prepare for these kinds of meetings, but we also

need to prepare to meet with God. As Jesus said, He who has ears to

hear, let him hear ( - Mt. 11:15, RSV) - Matthew 11:15 RSV}.

We must remember the critical responsibility each of us has to humbly

receive the Word as it is preached and respond in obedience to it.

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Humor - Preaching - Bad Sermons Eggs/Shoe‑box

Date Originally Filed - 3/1999.101

Bad Sermons

Shoebox in the Cupboard

This pastor is rushing around the house looking for his dress shoes

before church. While looking in the closet, he finds this strange

shoe‑box. When he opens it he finds 3 eggs and $100.

The next day he asks his wife what it was all about. She replies, "I

didn't want to tell you before because I didn't want to hurt your

feelings."

The pastor starts wondering what it can possibly be that would hurt

his feelings, and the wife continues, "You see since the day we

married 25 years ago I've been putting an egg in this box for every

bad sermon you've given."

The pastor thinks 3 eggs in 25 years, that's not so bad, then asks

"What's the $100 for?" His wife replies, "Every time I got a dozen

eggs I sold them to the neighbors for 50 cents."

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Preaching - The Pope and the Jew - Date Originally Filed - 4/1999.101

The Pope and the Jew

About a century or two ago, the Pope decided that all the Jews had to

leave Rome. Naturally there was a big uproar from the Jewish

community. So the Pope made a deal. He would have a religious debate

with a member of the Jewish community. If the Jew won, the Jews could

stay. If the Pope won, the Jews would leave.

The Jews realized they gad little choice. So the picked a middle aged

man named Moishe to represent them. Moishe asked for one addition to

the debate. To make it more interesting, neither side would be

allowed to talk.

The Pope agreed. The day of the great debate, Moishe and the Pope sat

opposite each other for a full minute before the Pope raised his hand

and showed three fingers. Moishe looked back at him and raised one

finger.

The Pope raised his fingers in a circle around his head. Moishe

pointed to the ground where

he sat. The Pope pulled out a wafer and a glass of wine. Moishe

pulled out an apple. The Pope stood up and said "I give up. This man

is too good. The Jews can stay."

An hour later the cardinals were all around the Pope asking him what

happened. The Pope said, "First I held up three fingers to represent

the Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger reminding me that

there was still one God common to both our religions. Then I waved my

finger around me to show him that God was all around us. He responded

by pointing to

the ground and showing that God was also right here with us. I pulled

out the wine and wafer to show that God absolves us from our sins. He

pulled out an apple to remind me of original sin. He had an answer for

everything. What could I do??"

Meanwhile the Jewish community had crowded around Moishe. "What

happened?" they asked. "Well," said Moishe, "First he said to me that

the Jews had three days to get out here. I told him that not one of

us is leaving. Then he told me that this whole city would be cleared

of Jews. I let him know that we were staying right here." "Yes,

yes..and then???" asked the crowd.

"I don't know." said Moishe, "He took out his lunch, and I took out

mine"

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Preaching - The fewer the better - Less is More

Date Originally Filed - 4/1999.101

- Ecclesiastes 6:11 (NIV) - Ecclesiastes 6:11 NIV} \bold{The

more the words, the less the meaning, }and how does that profit

anyone?

In preaching, the fewer the better.

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Preaching - Mother Teresa - preaches without preaching Mother Teresa

Date Originally Filed - 5/1999.101

One filled with joy preaches without preaching Mother Teresa

(Franklin Planner ‑ May 20, 1999)

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Preaching - The Preaching Report Card

Date Originally Filed - 9/1999.101

Summer 1999

SERMON ASSESSMENT

The Preaching Report Card

Today's listeners grade pastors on what they hear from the pulpit.

Eric Reed

"Good sermon," the churchgoer mumbles every Sunday, shaking the

pastor's hand as she leaves the sanctuary. The pastor wonders, Does

she mean it?

We wondered, too. We wondered how eager congregations are for change

in a time when communication is changing rapidly and dramatically.

We wondered how pastors go about their task, and whether the preaching

moment is all they hope it will be. So we asked pastors and the people

who listen to them to talk to us about preaching.

Our nationwide survey of 206 pastors and 2,233 church attenders was

conducted in February by the research department at Christianity

Today, Inc., and tabulated by Davison Dietsch McCarthy of Chicago.

Some of the results are unexpected. Listeners are satisfied with what

they hear. Their pastors are good communicators, listeners say, but

our survey indicates the people don't always get the message the

pastors intend. And on some issues, the view from the pew is very

different from the pastor's perspective.

We asked several noted preachers (pictured below) who are also

teachers and lifelong students of communication to help us understand

the results.

Here is what we discovered.

1. Pastors are harder on their preaching than their listeners are.

Listeners gave their pastors high marks. Only 6 percent rated their

pastor fair or poor, while 57 percent said excellent. These grades

held up even when comparing their pastor to preachers in other

services they've attended. That's important, according to Haddon

Robinson, preaching professor at Gordon‑Conwell Theological Seminary

in Massachusetts. "The parish concept is dead. People join a church

because of the pastor," Robinson said. "Those who like his preaching

stay, and those who don't go to the church down the street." In

effect, we may be hearing from satisfied customers who, in an era of

many church choices, have found what they like.

Churchgoers are satisfied, according to James Earl Massey, because the

quality of preaching has improved. Massey is dean emeritus of Anderson

University School of Theology in Anderson, Indiana, and former pastor

of Metropolitan Church in Detroit. "The tide is rising. Where once we

had a generation marked by just a few pulpit giants, today all our

ministers are better educated, have greater resources, and are simply

better preachers."

Both preachers and listeners surveyed agreed that the sermons were

encouraging, interesting, and compassionate, but beyond that their

perspectives differed. Listeners chose the terms clear and convicting,

while preachers saw themselves as energetic and conversational. Massey

attributes the difference, in part, to each person's concern with his

or her own goals. The listener wants comfort and direction. The

preacher wants to communicate well.

Warren Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago and

teacher on "Back to the Bible," agreed. "The congregation is thinking

I need healing, and the preacher enters the pulpit thinking

professionally. He's like a surgeon in the operating room. The surgeon

would say to his colleagues as they're washing down, Textbook

surgery.' He's thinking about his technique. The patient would wake up

and say, I feel much better.' He's thinking about his pain."

Now retired, Wiersbe often views preaching from the pew. "Some of the

sermons that have moved me greatly would not be considered great

preaching. I don't care if the (preacher) stumbles. If he says

something that really touches my heart and gives me the strength I

need for the week, I'm happy."

2. Listeners aren't preachers, but preachers must be listeners.

THUMBS UP

Which of the following words describe your/your pastor's preaching?

(each person could choose four)

PASTORS LISTENERS

Encouraging 68% 66%

\* Clear 46% 58%

Interesting 44% 45%

Compassionate 40% 43%

\* Convicting 18% 32%

Authoritative 28% 30%

\* Energetic 43% 29%

\* Conversational 46% 22%

Non‑threatening 7% 10%

Intense 9% 8%

Confrontational 10% 6%

Formal 3% 5%

Unclear 1% 2%

Uninteresting 0% 2%

\* = More than 10% differential

Pastors want to know if the sermon is hitting home, if people really

understand. Listeners said they get the message, but the differing

responses on the pastor's themes for the previous year indicate that

what's said isn't always what's heard. When asked, "What major themes

were preached last year?" considerably fewer listeners than pastors

said sermons were about "handling personal life issues."

"I can see why there's a tendency for people to say, He never spoke

to my problem,'" Robinson said. "The pastor, like a hovercraft, floats

over a lot of issues and believes he's talking to them, but he doesn't

address them directly."

The missing component is specificity. Robinson recommended applying

the scriptural principles to several different life situations.

"People will say, He really gets down where we are.'"

Pastors fear offending church members, said Calvin Miller of Beeson

Divinity School in Birmingham. "We preachers are more courageous in

our minds than in what we are saying. The genius of application is in

the courage to say exactly what you mean and not be afraid of

offending anyone."

We found some areas where listeners were willing to risk having their

toes stepped on. Application of Scripture to their lives was one. Time

was another.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

69% of pastors say they addressed

personal life issues last year. Only 52% of listeners agree.

53% of pastors say they preached

through a book of the Bible last

year. Only 38% of listeners

perceive it that way.

40% of pastors say God was a

main theme last year. 47% of

listeners spotted that theme.

The length of the sermon is important to some people, but not nearly

as important as we thought. In fact, pastors are more worried about

pleasing parishioners than parishioners are concerned about getting

out on time‑‑63 percent of pastors said they should trim their sermons

to congregational expectations, but only 39 percent of listeners

expected it.

Church attenders may recognize what Miller calls the bigger question:

Is God in charge? "(They want to know) is he really bringing revival

on these people? When that begins to occur, sermon length doesn't

matter much. In fact, services get longer, because something bigger is

happening."

Bryan Chapell, president of Covenant Theological Seminary in St.

Louis, Missouri, calls the 30‑minute sermon "the evangelical

standard." Our survey backed him up. Confirming that they were

describing the same experience, both pastors and listeners reported

sermon lengths that averaged 31.1 minutes. Just over one‑third were

more than 35 minutes.

Congregations grow accustomed to their preacher's habits, including

sermon length. "Exegete the culture and the text," Chapell said. "See

what their tolerances are. Make decisions based on what you are trying

to accomplish and on the capacity of the people to whom you are

speaking."

The 11 percent of listeners who wanted shorter sermons reported an

average length of 37.2 minutes. For those who believe the length is

fine as it is, their pastors' sermons averaged 30.3 minutes.

3. Preaching improvement must be self‑motivated.

Why Preach?

35% of pastors say changed lives

is their primary goal. 28% say

to glorify God.

If the congregation is generally satisfied with what it hears on

Sunday, then it will be up to the pastor to better his pulpit

performance. Few in the congregation have the expertise to judge the

technical aspects of preaching, and pastors may have too few points of

reference to make adequate comparisons.

The two groups showed the greatest differences of opinion when asked

how the sermon could be improved. Pastors were conscious of public

speaking techniques and trends in communication; listeners generally

were not.

Asked from whom they take their cues in preaching style, 66 percent

said preachers I know and 53 percent cited preaching classes or books.

Fewer than one‑fourth said they looked to preachers on radio or TV and

almost none cited other media personalities. Still, 46 percent called

their preaching conversational, a description not often used before

the TV age.

"Preaching is moving to a more conversational form, a more narrative

form," in Robinson's view. "TV is reflected in the style of the

leading preachers who in turn influence those who follow. Preachers

are more influenced by media than we realize." Robinson cited the

desire most pastors have to appear to be preaching without notes (even

though 95 percent use some kind of notes according to our survey.)

Blame it on the TelePrompTer. "For every 30‑minute sermon the pastor

preaches, the people invite Dan Rather into their homes five times,"

Miller said. "It's difficult to match that."

Massey says, don't try. "Pastors should note what makes television so

attractive to people, but the glamour of it doesn't bless the church.

There's simplicity in preaching that being a television personality

doesn't honor."

Hone/Alone

45% of pastors say their greatest

need in sermon delivery is

spiritual preparation.

43% say making applications is

their greatest improvement in

the past five years.

29% say it still needs work.

If exposure to media has changed expectations for communication, our

study showed the pastors are not likely to hear so from their people.

Only about half of the pastors we polled have an intentional ongoing

review of their preaching in place. Of that half, only 34 percent

include church members in the process. Pastors are more likely to ask

a spouse's opinion (61 percent) or self‑diagnose (56 percent regularly

listen to tapes of their sermons).

One question we asked could indicate the listeners' extreme

satisfaction with sermon delivery. More likely it shows who's actually

in touch with sermon trends and technique. Pastors were much more

likely to think that more illustrations, more narrative elements, and

a more commanding presence in the pulpit would make their sermons more

effective. Listeners were unmoved. Robinson said, "The survey says

listeners know what they like. I think they like what they know."

That the listeners are largely unaware of technique may be a good

thing. Wiersbe contended, "The ideal sermon is one where people come

up afterward and say, You know, I could have done that.'"

4. The future is now, for some.

EYE CONTACT

57% of pastors want to use a computer and video projector when they

preach. Here's how many use some visual enhancements:

Handout/bulletin insert 69%

Drama Team 30%

Overhead projector 25%

Video projector and PC 15%

Movie Clips 13%

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None of these 21%

Listeners showed little desire for their pastors to employ multimedia

in sermon delivery. As expected, interest in video projector and

computer‑enhanced sermons was higher among younger church attenders,

with 29 percent of those under 40 in favor of more usage. Better

educated listeners were also more open to innovation. Video elements

were favored by 37 percent of those listeners with a master's degree.

But overall, only 20 percent of listeners said sermons would be

improved by such additions. Response was similar for all visual and

dramatic elements: more than twice as many preachers as listeners

wanted media used to augment sermons.

"Pastors are trying anything to attract the next generation," said

Marguerite Shuster, pastor and preaching professor at Fuller

Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. "I'm for the use of

various enhancements, on an occasional basis and for specific

purposes. But these technologies are head trips rather than anything

that is likely to engage a person at the motivational level. It

teaches preachers that if they can just get information up on the

board, they don't have to worry about the skill of their composition,

the skill of their rhetoric." Shuster warned, "The power of personal

address‑‑God's address coming through the preacher‑‑is lost."

Others agreed. Calvin Miller said, "A measurable rapport, where the

audience actually leans toward the communicator, depends on an

undivided attention. If you have them looking at a bulletin and a

screen, you lose their attention to the speaker to some degree."

I Love to Tell My Story

25% of pastors think they should

tell more personal stories.

12% of listeners agree.

If a Powerpoint outline is directed to the head, then drama and movie

clips are aimed at the heart. Both miss their mark, in Chapell's

estimation. "If you are really going to move people at the level of

their will, you've got to get away from the media presentation. I hear

people‑‑not preachers, people‑‑say, We are saturated, drowning in

media overload. Sometimes we want to go to church where we can sit in

a quiet place and hear from God.'"

Chapell said the fascination with media in worship is a "passing fad."

But for now, most preachers want a video projector they can plug into

their computer and a drop‑down screen over the pulpit.

5. Staff size affects the pastor's perspective and sermon preparation.

THE RELENTLESS RETURN OF THE SABBATH

Here's a look at the pastor's week:

MON Start Sermon: 46%

TUE Start Sermon: 28%

WED

THUR Finish Sermon: 13%

FRI Finish Sermon: 24%

SAT Finish Sermon: 42%

SUN Finish Sermon: 18%

Solo pastors stood out in a couple of areas: they were not as likely

to have planned their sermon schedule in advance, and they were

significantly less optimistic about the long‑term effect of their

preaching.

Asked, "Compared to the time when you first started preaching, how do

you feel today about the power of your preaching to change lives?" 95

percent of pastors with full‑time ministerial staff responded more

hopeful. Only 74 percent of solo pastors said they were more hopeful.

Time may be a factor‑‑Wiersbe pointed out that the solo pastor is

always on call. Wiersbe said the size of his staff at the Moody Church

forced him to plan ahead. Solo pastors may not plan as far in advance

because they don't have as many people coordinating services and

programs with their preaching themes. But the issue may not be how the

solo pastor spends his or her time, but with whom.

"Solo pastors have more immediate contact with the sheep, and sheep

bite," observed Robinson. "Pastors with staff are shielded from a lot

of the trivia of a church‑‑Aunt Maude doesn't like praise choruses or

Uncle Joe is disgruntled. The solo pastor is more likely to deal with

the sick sheep than the well sheep."

Wiersbe concurred. "Those who have staff get better reports. Who does

the pastor ask, How am I doing?' If he asks the elders, the ones who

like him are going to say, You're doing fine, Pastor; we love you.'

The ones who don't like him won't say anything. My staff was always

honest with me."

Pastors with staff were much more likely to employ sermon evaluation.

Pastors with part‑time staff topped out at 70 percent, but only 43

percent of solo pastors reported systematic critique.

"If (pastoral staff) really are a team, then they have an advantage,"

Miller concluded.

"Those who have staff are more likely to focus on follow‑up than on

what happened on Sunday," Massey said. He warned the solo pastor

against concentrating on his preaching as the defining event of the

week. Ministry that results from the sermon is more important than the

sermon itself. The task for the solo pastor is to create a team with

his volunteer leaders that will put the message into action.

6. Some things get better with age.

Finally, how does age affect the preaching moment? Given the current

emphasis on the needs and tastes of younger listeners, we investigated

whether there are noticable differences between younger and older

listeners. Two trends surfaced: older listeners more readily accept

the authority of the message, especially if the messenger has been

their pastor for a long time, and older preachers are more comfortable

with the task.

In our list of 14 words used to describe their pastor's preaching,

authoritative was ranked fifth by listeners age 55 and older but fell

to ninth among listeners under 40. Almost half of listeners (48

percent) ascribed authority to the sermons of pastors they had heard

more than 15 years, but for those they've heard a shorter time, the

percentage was 29.

Massey senses a different attitude toward the sermon among younger

church attenders, one that may represent a shift in the culture away

from acceptance of objective authority. Younger listeners more

intentionally filter what they hear through their own experiences.

Older listeners are more ready to take Scripture at face value.

Still, the younger pastor is at a disadvantage, Robinson said. "The

congregation says, It's hard to believe that this kid can teach me

anything.' Respect comes with age. People sort of assume you're doing

it right."

While the congregation grows comfortable with their pastor over time,

the pastors grow more assured.

Feelings

More than 60% of listeners say

they feel challenged and

encouraged after their pastor's

sermons. Fewer than 5% say they

are bored, discouraged, or glad

it's over.

"When you're younger, you're always wondering if you're getting it

right‑‑in theology, homiletics, communication," Robinson said. Our

survey shows that older preachers don't seem to worry so much. Before

the sermon, 81 percent of older preachers (age 55 and over) described

themselves as motivated and 52 percent were confident. Younger

preachers (age 40 and under) register motivation at 61 percent and

confidence at 39 percent. Younger preachers were more anxious than

older preachers, 39 percent to 19 percent.

Two‑thirds of younger pastors found the preaching event draining while

two‑thirds of older preachers called it fulfilling. And while four in

ten younger preachers replayed the sermon in their minds afterward,

only one in ten of the long‑term pastors relived the moment.

"Older preachers have less emotional attachment to their words,"

Miller observed. He finds encouragement in that. "They've preached a

lot of sermons so they don't think every sermon has to be a

world‑changing event. They no longer have to play the prophet. They

can state the truth and not get all bothered by it. When they finish

the sermon, there will still be hands to shake and babies to kiss at

the door."

Eric Reed is associate editor of LEADERSHIP.

The experts who helped us interpret our survey's findings:

Bryan Chapell

James Earl Massey

Calvin Miller

Haddon Robinson

Marguerite Shuster

Warren Wiersbe

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Summer 1999, Vol. XX, No. 3, Page 82

See the web site, it has great graphics ‑

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http://www.wsbaptist.com/fsi/kerux/index.htm

Speaking With Bold Assurance

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Compromising by Gus Nichols

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Just Preach Jesus by Timothy A. Forlines

The Message of the Failed Sirens by Mike Benson

A Minister's Apologia

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Out of the Dark Ages by Lynn Parker

Preachers' Methods. by J. W. McGarvey

Preaching: Has The Change Been For The Better Or For The Worse? by

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Preaching Power In Acts by Johnny Ramsey

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What Is Required by Bobby Key

Why Are You Going To Work Today, Daddy? by B. J. Clarke

Why Go To Rome? by John W. Moore

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Preaching - Top 10 Mistakes

Date Originally Filed - 5/2000.101

Top 10 Mistakes

Vol. 4 No. 1 Winter 2000

A look at the biggest issues facing novice preachers‑what to avoid and

how to do better.

By Steve Nicholson

Over the years I've coached dozens of young preachers. It usually

takes years of development and practice to become a really good

preacher. Along the way, there are many mistakes to overcome. The

following is a list of the top ten that, in my observation, are the

most common. If you're struggling with these problems in preaching,

take heart! Nearly all preachers have had to overcome these

difficulties along the way. You will, too. Let this list be an alert

to help you.

1. Trying to do too much in one sermon

In their eagerness, young preachers often end up trying to preach too

many ideas with several main points all in one sermon‑with the result

that the sermon is confused or too long or missing application. Ask

yourself of each sermon, "What one main thing should the person

listening to this sermon take home?" and then work on supporting that

one main point.

2. Failing to plan ahead

For years I thought I had hear from God each week about what was to be

preached the following Sunday. For some reason, God all too often

didn't speak until Saturday night, which meant there wasn't enough

time for good preparation and study. I often found that enormous

amounts of time were expended trying to decide what to preach‑to the

expense of actual preparation of the sermon. Then I realized that God

could speak months in advance just as easily as minutes in advance. I

now pray and plan for sermon series six months ahead, and our schedule

usually includes the preacher assigned (we have team preaching) and

the text or title of the series. We typically preach 4‑6 week series,

and thus actually cover about 10 different series a year. Not only has

this helped my sanity, but it has done wonders for preparation. I can

gather material for something now which I know I'm doing months from

now, and can do much more in‑depth study and preparation.

3. Failing to actually preach from the Bible

It is far too easy to use a line or verse from the Bible as a

springboard into what we want to say rather than taking the Bible

seriously and wrestling with its implications. In recent years it has

become popular to string together a series of disconnected verses to

fit into a preacher‑constructed message about a "better way to live."

While on occasion this may be appropriate, I don't think this is good

as a steady diet for those who want to grow in Christ. Our preaching

should also be teaching our people a respect for the Word of God and

giving them an idea about how to actually study it. They need to learn

about the flow of scripture, the characters of scripture, the stories

of scripture, and the arguments of scripture. They need to hear us

preach about the difficult passages as well as the ones we like. Even

though my preaching team tends to do series with a topical subject, we

almost always insist that any given sermon be from ONE passage of

scripture, and that the points of the sermon be taken from the

scripture text itself. Otherwise we could be in danger of becoming

preachers of the latest pop theories rather than preachers of the Word

of God.

4. Slipping into too much negativity

We all know that, whether we're talking to children or the family dog,

the tone of voice can communicate more than the actual words. But we

often forget that this is true of adults and congregations as well.

People may end up "taking home" our attitude as much as anything we

actually recommend. After a few years of cleaning up people's sins and

problems and encountering various disappointments, it's easy for a

pastor to become overly negative, or to shift into constantly

challenging people to do more, more, more. The result can be

demoralizing for a congregation which feels it's being "whipped" every

Sunday, or that nothing is ever enough for this pastor. So, watch your

tone. Give people hope. Preach about what God has doneand not only

about what people need to do.

5. Weak introductions

Have you ever noticed how most TV shows begin by a little segment that

grabs your attention even before the opening credits roll? Sermons

likewise need to grab people's attention quickly. Otherwise many

people will tune out before you've even begun. Introductions need to

give people a beginning answer to the question "So what?" Begin with a

story that illustrates the problem you plan to address, or the point

you are trying to make. There are many creative ways to do

introductions, but don't fail to make it interesting and compelling.

6. Not taking the actual lives and situations of the congregation into

account

The young preacher can fall into the trap of directing the bulk of his

comments, illustrations, and applications to only one segment of his

congregation and leaving the rest out. And he can run the risk of

preaching the ideals without taking into account the difficulties and

complexities of actually living the life of the average person in the

pew. Remember that in most groups you have single mothers, students,

people with jobs demanding 60‑80 hours a week, people who've been

divorced, people who are grieving, people under stress and financial

difficulty. Don't fail to take their actual lives into account as you

are preaching.

7. Over ‑generalizing

This is the error of turning "some" into "all," and "sometimes" into

"always." If you over‑generalize about any situation or group, there

are always going to people who feel that the generalization is not

true and who‑on that one point‑invalidate the whole sermon.

8. Too few illustrations and stories

These are the "windows" of the sermon. A sermon that goes on too long

without these becomes a lecture that few people will be moved by. It

gets stale, like a house without windows. So unless the whole sermon

is in essence "a story", be sure to add some for each major point or

every 10 minutes or so.

9. Weak applications

I've seen many young pastors with a great message with a great point

then fail to "take it home" by too little application. Ask yourself

and then answer, "What do I want people to do with this message?" Make

sure you ask people to evaluate themselves, to consider their own

lives, to make different choices, to think differently in some way or

another. And the applications need to be clear and specific enough

that people can easily visualize what it is you are talking about.

10. Too little creativity in conveying the message

Irrelevancy and boredom are two of the greatest factors leading young

people out of church. We need to be careful that this is not the case

with our preaching. Good preaching should have them on the edge of

their seats, or sinking down with conviction, or laughing with joy‑but

never yawning because it's boring and predictable. That takes a lot of

work. But it's worth it.

Steve Nicholson is the senior pastor of the Evanston vineyard and

directs church planting nationaally for VineyardUSA.

\webpage{http://www.vineyardusa.org/forums/churchplanting/cuttingedge/2

000/vol4no1/10\_mistakes.htm

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/mChristmas

/sThe Santa Question (Kids)

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Date Originally Filed - 5/2000.101

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The Santa Question How to separate fact from fiction‑‑ without

ruining your kids Christmas

by Richard Patterson, Jr.

illustration by Kari Kroll

Go to any mall this season and youll hear "Santa Claus Is Coming to

Town." Its music to childrens ears, but after our first son was

born, it became unwelcome noise to my wife and me. We wanted our

family to celebrate Christmas for what it really is: Jesus birthday.

We soon learned that good intentions go only so far. It seemed that

everyone was asking our son, "What did you ask Santa for?" And from

mid‑November on, every store we visited had a costumed Santa (or two

or three) on hand. We couldnt just ignore this guy: He was

everywhere!

My own childhood memories include Santa: I can remember going into the

woods to cut our Christmas tree, decorating it with tinsel and then

waiting impatiently for Santa to arrive. So many of the Christmas

memories that I wanted to share involved Santa. It became clear that

we needed to deal with Santa before we could help our son learn the

true meaning of Christmas. But how could we talk about Santa and still

give Christ his rightful place?

Even though for some, Santa symbolizes the commercialism that taints

the Christmas season, we knew that stern lectures about consumerism or

materialism would make no sense to a child. After all, how can a

jolly, generous guy who loves children and gives them presents be bad?

Instead we opted for a nonconfrontational approach. We decided to

gently but firmly undermine Santa whenever the opportunity arose,

while focusing most of our efforts and excitement on celebrating the

birth of the Christ child. That way, we hoped, it would be clear to

our son that Jesus really is the center of our familys Christmas

celebration.

Gentle Questions

By the time he was 5, our son started noticing that there were Santas

at every store, and he began to ask questions: "Which one is the real

Santa, Daddy?"

I took advantage of the opportunity by asking him: "What do you think?

A real person cant be in a lot of different places at the same time,

can he? And how can Santa visit all the houses of all the children in

the world in just one night? A real person couldnt do that, but a

pretend person could, couldnt he?"

Children have a marvelous ability to believe in magical behavior. But

by the time theyre 5 or 6, they begin to separate fact from fantasy.

When reading fairy tales to my son, I would stress that Jack of Jack

and the Beanstalk or Paul Bunyan were able to do things that real

people couldnt. With carefully worded questions, I knew I could

encourage his developing ability to understand that not every person

we talk about is real; some "people" are just pretend.

When your child begins to ask questions about how Santa can enter a

house that doesnt have a fireplace, help her understand that Santa is

a pretend person, like a cartoon character. You can even make a game

of it. When reading a favorite childrens book with her, ask, "Is

Curious George real or pretend? Are Mom and Dad real or pretend?"

Fantasy and play acting are a fun and healthy part of childhood. And

if your kids understand that Santa isnt real, theres no harm if they

join their friends in pretending about him. When our first son was

young, wed exchange a wink as we secretly went along with others

(adults as well as children) who spoke of Santa as if he were real. It

became a game our entire family enjoyed.

We hoped it would be

clear to our son

that Jesus really is

the center of our family's

Christmas Celebration

Since some parents encourage their children to believe in Santa, we

told our kids: "If other childrens parents want them to believe in

Santa, dont argue with them. Youre grown up enough to know the

truth, and someday these other children will be, too."

If your child wants to know the origins of the Santa legend, explain

that Santa is also called "Saint Nick" for Saint Nicholas, a fourth

century Christian known for his tremendous kindness and generosity.

That can lead into a discussion of the wonderful gift of Gods grace

that came to earth when Christ was born on the first Christmas.

Real, But Unseen

Christian parents want their children to understand that while Santa

is pretend, Jesus is real! We celebrate Jesus birth at Christmas and

hes still alive today. Making that powerful truth clear to our son

was the second part of our strategy. While we adopted a policy of

"benign neglect" toward Santa, we focused our energies on enjoying the

many Christmas traditions that honor the living Savior.

As our family grew, our sons had fun opening the little pockets of the

Advent calendar we used during the month leading up to Christmas. Each

pocket contained a Bible verse. When they were old enough, they would

read the verse to the rest of us.

Some families we know gather on Christmas Eve to read the Christmas

story from the Bible. As the children are able, they take turns

reading, or each one reads the part of a different character in the

story. We made it a tradition to attend Christmas Eve worship at 11:00

p.m.

Even as children move into their teen years, they still need Christmas

traditions that keep them focused on Christ. Encourage your older kids

to give Jesus a "birthday gift," such as a promise to help an elderly

neighbor, or to give a portion of their allowance to advance missions

or assist the needy. The act of giving something that blesses the

lives of others is a perfect way to stress an important Christmas

truth: God sent the ultimate blessing to earth in the gift of his Son.

The Joy of Giving

Our culture has shifted its focus from giving to getting, but

Christians know the truth: Christmas is a season for giving. We wanted

our children to know that not only have they been given the greatest

gift of all, Gods Son, but that it is indeed "more blessed to give

than to receive" ( - Acts 20:35 - Acts 20:35}).

Its important to observe holiday traditions that teach this

principle. Many churches have "Angel Trees" that list the names of

children in need. Families can choose one or more names, and child ren

can help purchase gifts for those in need.

Some families we know have "adopted" a child through World Vision or

Compassion Inter national. In addition to sending a special gift at

Christmas, they also send the child a handmade card with greetings

from each member of the family. Other families arrange to bring small

gifts to kids who have to be hospitalized over the holidays.

For the past several years, our family has given a grocery store gift

certificate to a needy family. We also sign up to serve Christmas

dinner at the city mission. Last year we helped serve almost 1,000

meals in about three hours. We were all pretty tired, but came away

with a sense of having honored some of those Christ called "the least

of these brothers of mine" ( - Matt. 25:40 - Matthew 25:40}).

It has helped our sons experience firsthand the blessedness of giving

and also helped them appreciate the difference between what we want

and what we truly need.

The clamor about Santa and "what am I getting?" seemed to fade from

our sons consciousness a little each Christmas. Of course, they were

growing up, but I think it was more than that. I believe it came from

an emphasis on Christ‑centered traditions and our own example of

downplaying Santa. Those are the most effective ways to drown out the

clamor of commercialism and help our children hear clearly the "good

news of great joy" that truly is our greatest Christmas gift.

Richard Patterson, Jr., is a children and family ministries specialist

from New York state. He is the author of Confident Parenting in

Challenging Times (Tekna). He and his wife have two children.

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Preaching - Lessons on Preaching

Date Originally Filed - 9/2000.101

Journal Articles

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Preaching - Playful - The Playful Preacher - By Richard Hansen

Date Originally Filed - 3/1995.101

FEATURE: HANSEN: The Playful Preacher

By Richard Hansen

If trying harder doesn't work, try a lighter touch.

"Rich, you've got to try harder!"

An earnest student, I had conscientiously visited everyone on the

hospital

floors assigned to me. I had written detailed verbatim reports. Now,

my

clinical pastoral education supervisor was frustrating me.

"What more should I do?" I replied.

"Just try harder" was his enigmatic reply. So I tried harder. But

every week

his exhortation was the same. One day, in anger and frustration, I

blurted

out, "I can't try harder! I give up!"

"Good!" he replied, softening immediately.

The lesson I learned fourteen years ago still lingers: trying harder

doesn't

work. It's like a pair of Chinese handcuffs: the harder you pull, the

tighter

they get. Only by pushing both fingers together (the opposite of

trying

harder) will the handcuffs release.

The same is true in my preaching. When I work too hard to make an

impact,

when I assume too much responsibility for changing others, I can

inhibit the

very changes in my listeners I desperately seek. My well‑intentioned

efforts

actually make matters worse.

In his book "Generation to Generation," Edwin Fried man speaks to the

paradox

of trying harder: "If we assume that any chronic condition that we are

persistently trying to change will, perversely, be supported not to

change by

our serious efforts to bring about change, then it is logical to

consider the

possibility that one way out of this paradox is to be paradoxical."

The paradoxical way: to become less serious and more playful.

But that's not easy for me, one whose spiritual ancestors are John

Calvin and

John Knox. They were passionate for the gospel, but playful? Still,

having

wrestled with the paradoxes of trying too hard, I decided to lighten

up.

Here's what I've discovered.

COLORING INSIDE THE LINES

Playfulness is sometimes misunderstood.

One of my early attempts came while preaching about sexuality. To

introduce

the sermon, I asked both the men and women to read responsively some

of the

more graphic passages from the Song of Songs. Sure that I had made my

point,

I playfully asked when they were finished, "Did any of you know this

X‑rated

material was in the Bible?"

I was met with stone‑faced, hostile silence.

The following Monday, a line of unhappy campers were parked in the

reception

area for their turn to file into my office: "We don't use that kind of

language in church!" Even a woman of my own baby‑boomer generation,

whose

support I had come to expect, said later, "If I'd had to say 'breasts'

one

more time, I would have died!"

One person's playfulness is another's irreverence. So it is wise to

know your

congregation's limits.

Another try with my current church brought better results. A guest

preacher

had described being so excited when his football team scored a

touchdown that

he jumped off the couch in front of the divided, pumped his arm up and

down,

and shouted, "Yes, yes, yes. YES!" So I decided to use his antics the

following Sunday after a soloist had just sung a deeply moving piece.

"There's just one thing I want to say after James's song," I said in

my best

preacher's voice. I paused. Then, pumping my arm, I said, "Yes, yes,

yes.

YES!" Everyone who had attended the previous Sunday roared with

laughter.

My former congregation would have seen this as irreverent. But not

this

church. They considered it playful‑‑and appropriate.

Playfulness is more than spontaneity. Witty, extroverted preachers are

not

necessarily playful. Nor is it a worship style. "Free" worship styles

can

also have cemented boundaries‑‑just try something that isn't

spontaneous!

Neither is playfulness reverse psychology. It's not stating the

opposite of

what I desire. ("Guess what? Our church does not need your money this

year.")

Such obvious gimmicks are both ineffective and false.

Playfulness does not misrepresent or deny the truth; it creates a new

dynamic‑‑within me.

"The major effect of playfulness and paradox is on the perpetrator,"

says

Friedman. "It takes him or her out of the feedback position. It

detriangles

and changes the balance of the emotional interdependency. It is the

change in

the structure of the triangle that gets the other person functioning

or

thinking differently."

In preaching, I am the "perpetrator." Becoming more playful affects me

more

than my audience. I lighten up. Playfulness frees me from trying so

hard to

make an impact. Hence, the emotional triangle involving me, the

congregation,

and the message changes. People are free to listen without activating

their

defenses. The possibility of impact actually increases.

That's the paradox.

AROUND THE MAGINOT LINE

I've found it helpful to identify who in the congregation I feel most

responsible to convince. Ironically, these are often the very people I

will

never touch. Why? They have built a Maginot Line.

The Maginot Line was the impenetrable system of barriers and bunkers

built by

France to protect itself from Imperial Germany after World War I. In

World

War II, however, Hitler didn't attack France through the Maginot Line.

His

Panzer divisions made a sweeping detour around it through Belgium.

France

fell swiftly.

When preachers try too hard to make an impact, klaxons sound and

bunker walls

go up. My people often know what I'm going to say even before I say it

(they

know the issues I'm most serious about). When facing a Maginot Line,

frontal

attacks are valiant but ineffective.

Rather than slug it out in a frontal attack, wisdom suggests a detour.

What

is the last thing they expect me to say on this issue? What would make

them

laugh? How can I good‑naturedly (not spitefully) be playful? Why am I

trying

so hard with them anyway?

In a sermon on God's destruction of Sodom, my self‑diagnosis revealed

that I

especially wanted to reach the folks who cheer for judgment rather

than, as

Abraham did, pray for mercy. My detour began with a playful scene of

righteous folks building grandstands on the hills above that evil city

to

enjoy the Lord's impending judgment:

"With football‑stadium fervor, they waved banners and chanted, 'Go

God‑‑crush

Sodom!' But Abraham was not cheerleading. Sodom included his own

nephew, Lot.

For Abraham, Sodom could never be just 'them,' those evil people not

like us.

There is some of 'us' in Sodom, for Abraham and for all of us.

Realizing this

prompts us to pray for God's mercy rather than cheer for God's

judgment."

(One elderly farmer who obviously didn't take the detour said to me

afterward, "While you were preaching, all I could think about is

wishing God

would push the whole city of San Francisco into the ocean!")

TO STING LIKE A BEE

Trying‑harder preaching often goes hand in hand with an over‑emphasis

on

content. As a young preacher, I was certain that if I marshaled enough

exegetical evidence (from the original languages, of course), I could

bludgeon my listeners into belief. My sermons were like boxing

matches: I

didn't always score a knockout, but I expected to win on points.

Since then, I have joined the Mohammed Ali school of homiletics. I

must learn

to dance like a butterfly if I want to sting like a bee. The footwork

of the

sermon (how you say it) is just as, if not more, essential than the

content

(what you say).

Of course, you remember the cartoon of a boxer who dances all over the

ring,

obviously impressed with his footwork, only to be knocked out by a

single

punch. Footwork is a means to an end‑‑impact. Playful sermons are not

intended to impress the listener (or the preacher) with one's

creativity.

They are used to communicate truth.

Once I wanted to preach about the Lord's Supper as being a prelude to

the

Messianic banquet. I wanted to communicate the joy felt by the early

church

as they celebrated this event. However, only by coming at the sermon

in a

lighter fashion could I detour around my church's years of solemn

tradition.

The Sacrament had an aura more of wake than banquet.

I hit on the idea of having eyewitnesses report on their joyful

experience.

Rather than using real people, I imagined what caterers present at the

meals

might have observed.

The sermon opened with two caterers pausing for breath while serving

the

heavenly banquet. Soon they begin to reminisce about their previous

catering

jobs for the Lord. They remember the joyful Old Testament feasts in

the

Temple, Jesus' upper room meal with his disciples, the agape meals of

the

early church, and twentieth‑century expressions that somehow (in the

caterers' minds) lost the intended joy. Finally, the caterers gesture

at the

people enjoying the heavenly banquet and ask each other, "When they

were back

on earth, do you ever wonder if they really understood what they were

doing?"

This sermon, "Observations of God's Caterers," was my fancy footwork

around

the entrenched expectations of my listeners. Because it was screened

through

playful, imaginary characters, most who listened did not feel

defensive or

threatened.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

Some of us need permission to be playful. Like my personality, my

preaching

tends to be serious: to travel well‑worn intellectual pathways,

expressing

the doctrines of the faith in centuries‑old imagery. Fortunately, I

also have

some friends who release me to be playful with the great themes of my

faith.

One such friend is Frederick Buechner. Another is C.S. Lewis. While

studying,

I keep an anthology of one or the other close at hand. I often dip

into it

for fifteen or twenty minutes as I begin thinking about my sermon.

Their

playful ideas, even on topics completely unrelated to my theme, push

me to

play with ideas as well. In their company, I see fresh approaches to

the old,

old story.

One such approach is playing the Devil's Advocate. Serious preachers

like me

often have so many points to make, we skip over the questions that

perplex

our listeners. I have to keep coming back to the question: How might

my

message not ring true with life on the street?

While preparing for a sermon on Jesus' challenge to enter the kingdom

of God

like a child, a woman in one of our seeker Bible studies came to mind.

Deathly afraid of being manipulated, she would be repelled by Jesus'

challenge. To her, children are vulnerable.

That caused me to imagine other objections: Is reclaiming childhood

innocence

a sentimental illusion for an adult? If Jesus is talking about naive,

simple‑minded faith, what adult wants that?

Soon I not only had lots of questions to ask the text on behalf of my

people,

but the questions pushed me beyond the pat answers I might otherwise

have

offered.

PLAYING WITH WORDS

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word,"

wrote Mark

Twain, "is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."

That's a helpful reminder. Words are the raw materials of sermons. The

right

use of words can inject a sermon with needed doses of playfulness.

Here are

some questions I ask myself to add freshness to my words:

Can it be understood in different ways? While preparing an Easter

message on

the Emmaus road experience, I noticed that when the doubtful disciples

were

confronted with the risen Christ, they "disbelieved for joy"

( - Luke 24:41 - Luke 24:41},

RSV).

It dawned on me that "I can't believe it" can be understood in two

ways:

either as an expression of doubt or as an ecstatic expression of joy

(like

when the 1980 U.S. hockey team won an Olympic gold medal against

overwhelming

odds: "I can't believe it!").

My sermon traced the journey each of us take with the disciples. It

began

with the "I can't believe it" of doubt and despair while trudging down

the

Emmaus road and ended with the "I can't believe it" of joy, hugging

and

dancing in the presence of the risen Christ.

Does it mean the same thing to all people? Fresh off the farm, I once

heard

several teenagers in inner‑city Minneapolis exclaim that a sleek

passing car

was "bad." I was their youth worker.

"What's bad about it?" I asked naively. "It looks neat to me!"

That embarrassing moment started me thinking of events in life we

wrongly

interpret as bad in the literal sense but which a sovereign God sees

as being

ultimately good.

Does it have a little known or surprising meaning? Dr. Ian

Pitt‑Watson,

professor of preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, once preached a

sermon

in which he playfully countered the common assumption that Jesus'

beatitude

"blessed are the meek" implies wimpish weakness.

He observes of the word meek: "In the French Bible the word is

translated

debonnaire‑‑debonair!‑‑with overtones of courtesy, gallantry, chivalry

(remember Hollywood's 'golden oldies' and Cary Grant in his heyday?).

Debonair: gentle, sensitive, courteous, modest, unpretentious‑‑yet

strong and

brave and fun and happy."

Debonair Cary Grant released meekness from the negative images from

which I

had imprisoned it.

Will different age groups hear it differently? Recently I introduced a

sermon

by narrating a comic strip showing Barney, the preschooler's purple

dinosaur,

being swallowed up by a fearsome Tyrannosaurus Rex from Jurassic Park.

I

began, however, by asking the congregation, "When you hear the name

Barney,

who flashes into your mind?"

I offered some possibilities that occurred to me as a child of early

divided

(Barney Fife, Barney Rubble). Shaking hands at the door afterwards,

the older

generation bombarded me: "I thought of Barney Oldfield," "I thought of

Barney

Google."

Introducing the sermon by simply playing with one word arrested the

attention

of several generations.

Not every sermon can or should be playful. But when we find ourselves

trying

harder to little effect, we may be caught in the handcuffs of trying

harder.

Freedom comes as we can say with Bill Murray, an alumnus of Saturday

Night

Live, "Hey, I'm serious!"

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Preaching - How to Be Heard

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How to Be Heard

Mastering six overlooked fundamentals of clear communication.

by Fred Smith

When this article appeared in Leadership, exactly a decade ago,

readers gave it high marks. Many books and articles on preaching, it

seems, are too simple or too complex. Readers told us they appreciated

this article by Fred Smith because it applies expert wisdom to the

basics. It's uncommonly wise on the common elements of public

speaking.

Every summer you can find advertisements for basketball or football

camps where big‑name stars, for a fee, will instruct young people

dreaming of athletic greatness.

I wonder how much actual learning takes place when an all‑star

quarterback, who spends most of his time reading and outmaneuvering

sophisticated defenses, tries to coach a junior‑higher who's still

trying to figure out how to grip the ball with hands that aren't quite

big enough.

Sometimes people learn more, not from the superstars who have long

since learned to perform the basics without conscious thought, but

from others only slightly further down the road, those who've recently

shared the same struggle.

Often, I suspect, a similar effect happens to those who want to

achieve superstar poise and eloquence in the pulpit. The key is

focusing not on the dazzling techniques but on the fundamentals.

Improvement comes from concentrating on the basics until we can

perform them without conscious thought. We need to focus on the basics

and to find pleasure in the step‑by‑step advance.

Here are some fundamental areas that I find speakers may overlook as

they try to improve.

Establishing a friendly atmosphere

To a large degree, the atmosphere we establish will determine how

effective our sermon is going to be. Atmosphere is created by both our

verbal and nonverbal messages.

I hear a lot of preachers, for instance, who are pretty sloppy in

their opening comments. Perhaps it's because they haven't thought

about them, but the mood they create right from the start makes it

tough to benefit from the rest of the sermon.

Most of us know you don't want to start on a negative note. "I hope

you all will excuse my voice this morning. I've had a cold all week."

Or "I really appreciate you all coming on a miserable, rainy day like

today."

Or "Folks, we just are not getting enough people. When I stand up here

and look out at this congregation..."

What kind of impression do these introductions make on the listeners?

Probably not a good one. You're not starting from their need. You're

starting from your need. And that's not the way to fill people with

anticipation for the Word you have to give.

This is why I enjoy starting with something like "This has been a

wonderful week"‑‑people want to know why it's been wonderful. They've

had a lousy week. But there are few weeks for which you can't think up

some way it has been good‑‑"I haven't been sued a single time this

week." And people laugh.

Or "I haven't had an automobile accident this week, not even a

scratch." Little things like that. And then you can say, "No, really.

It's been a fine week. I talked to some friends on the phone, and I

was just reminded of the marvelous gift of friendship."

This builds a friendly atmosphere. It conveys a feeling anybody can

identify with.

People may say to themselves, "Yes, I talked to some friends this

week, too. And sometimes I forget how good that is."

That's one way to help establish a warm, friendly atmosphere. There

are other ways, but the important thing is to avoid opening negatively

or from self‑interest or insecurity. I want to communicate openness,

that I'm here to serve these people.

This setting of the atmosphere, of course, begins before I speak my

first word. We can show warmth by our demeanor on the platform. I try

to pick out certain people and smile at them. This not only affirms

those people, but it also shows the whole congregation I'm glad to be

there.

People need to know how you feel before you start to speak. They want

to know whether you're friendly or worried or mad. For me, the most

difficult discipline in speaking is going in with the proper attitude.

If I do not want to speak, it is so difficult for me to speak well.

Attitude control is essential. I must go up there with a friendly

attitude, with a genuine desire to help those people, to give them

something they'll find beneficial.

It also helps to notice how people are sitting and to gauge the

emotional climate of the congregation. This affects how you need to

come across.

Recently I spoke at a Presbyterian church in Memphis. The 8 a.m.

service was about half full. People were sitting in ones and twos and

threes. This means I needed to communicate with them individually. The

11 a.m. service, however, was packed, which meant I needed to

communicate to them en masse.

What's the difference? When people are scattered in a sparsely

populated sanctuary, they feel exposed. They can't hide. In a jammed

auditorium, people think they're hidden, anonymous, and therefore as

you speak, you can detect a more open response.

So in the 8 a.m. service, I knew I had to be more personal, speaking

as if we were standing face to face and having a conversation. In my

opening comments, I used the approach I would if I'd just shaken hands

with someone. "You know I'm a Baptist. You also know I'm a social

climber, since I'm talking to Presbyterians." I laughed, and they gave

a me a courteous laugh. You don't expect a big laugh out of a sparse

audience any more than you would from someone you're just getting

acquainted with.

Then I said a few more personal things, just as if we were still

shaking hands. "You know, I was born less than a hundred miles from

this place. The town has been kind enough not to put up a sign

disclaiming it, even though they haven't put up a sign claiming it."

That kind of light humor fits a small audience. I wouldn't tell a

story that requires a big audience in that situation. I just needed to

introduce myself with a warm, friendly little greeting.

At 11 A.M., however, with the place packed and with the magnificent

choir behind me, I started by turning to the choir and saying, "I

wanted to be a singer, not a businessman. And I had everything except

talent." That's a crowd joke. I wouldn't have said that to just a few

people. But the choir laughed, and the whole church laughed. Then I

went ahead and said, "When I found out I couldn't be a singer, I went

into religious music, leading singing." They, of course, caught the

innuendo, and they laughed freely with me, and I was ready to proceed

with my remarks. But that kind of humor requires a large audience.

So whether you're a rookie speaker or a seasoned pastor, and by

whatever the technique, it's important to begin by establishing a

friendly atmosphere.

When people are thinking more

about how you're saying something

than what you're saying, your effectiveness is lost.

Encouraging participation, not observation

Another way we all can improve is by remembering that our goal is not

simply to have people sit quietly while we talk, but to have their

minds actively engaged by our subject matter.

Since I've been writing for Leadership, I've had various preachers

send me sermon tapes. I have to believe they send me their best tape.

And I really ache. I'd like to sit down with them and say, "Let's talk

about what you're doing as a communicator."

One common mistake is trying to create feelings by

overdramatization‑‑by telling sob stories, or getting tears in the

voice, or yelling. Listeners quickly realize the speaker isn't

depending on the subject matter to produce the emotion, but the

dramatization. And when people are thinking more about how you're

saying something than what you're saying, your effectiveness is lost.

On the other hand, some preachers are so deadpan, they might as well

be reading a recipe or a research report. You'd never guess they

thought real people were listening.

In either case, my recommendation is to try more conversational

preaching. People listen to it without antipathy. When I raise my

voice, people tend to put up a barrier to my increased volume. It's

like that story about the kid who told his mother he'd decided to be a

preacher.

"Why?" she asked.

"Well," he said, "if I'm going to be attending church all my life, I'd

much rather stand up and yell than sit and listen to it."

The minute somebody starts yelling, people mentally distance

themselves. Many preachers think they're doing it for emphasis, but

generally it doesn't work that way. It deemphasizes.

If I want to say something really important, I'll lower my voice‑‑and

people will kind of lean forward to hear what I'm saying. In a sense,

you're putting intimacy in a point by lowering your voice. You're

saying, "This point means something to me. I'm telling you something

from my heart."

By increasing the volume, often the sermon comes across as more a

performance than a heartfelt point you're making to another

individual. If you want people to digest what you're saying, you don't

want them to feel you're performing.

I don't want people to observe. I want them to participate, because

the whole object of speaking is to influence attitudes and behavior.

How do I encourage participation? Not necessarily by being

entertaining. If people are listening for the next story or next joke,

I've become a performer. I've got to be smart enough to know when my

material is getting inside them. I may need to make them laugh. I may

need a pointed statement. But when they are genuinely listening and

understanding, they are participating.

My goal is not to have people say, "Oh, you're such a great speaker."

Then I know I've failed. If they are conscious of my speaking ability,

they see me as a performer. They have not participated. My goal is for

people to say, "You know, Fred, I've had those kinds of thoughts all

my life, but I've never had the words for them. Now I've got words for

them." Then I feel I've given them a handle for something. I've

crystallized their thoughts and experiences into a statement or story

and made it real for them. I've enabled them to give it to somebody

else.

Obviously speakers must do the talking, but you let the audience

"talk" too. You talk for them. If I'm making a controversial point,

I'll say, "I can tell by your faces that you really don't agree with

that." Or "You're saying to me, 'That's all right for you to say, but

that doesn't fit my situation.' And I agree with you, because all of

us are not alike."

What I've done is to say their words for them. They're thinking, He

understands. He's not trying to poke this stuff down our throat. And

they want me to continue the conversation.

The key here is to make sure we see the process as a conversation and

not a performance. The way I've disciplined myself on this is to ask

myself if I secretly enjoy the front‑and‑center role. I believe I'm

never ready to speak for God unless I'd rather somebody else do it. No

matter how much preparation I've done, if at the moment before I

stand, I wouldn't be happy for somebody else to do it, then I'm not

ready to speak for God. I'm really going to be speaking for myself.

And people will be observing a performance, not participating in the

presentation of a clear biblical word.

Ensuring I'm believable

I keep a constant watch on my believability. Unless I can believe me

when I make a statement, I won't make it.

At certain times I can believe me saying something, because I'm

practicing what I'm preaching. But other times I can't, and I'll cut

that part out of my speech. Let's say I've had an argument with my

wife before I speak. I will not use an illustration or statement about

the marital love relationship because Mary Alice wouldn't believe me

if I said it‑‑and I wouldn't, either. Even though the statement is

absolutely true, I could not say it and believe it.

Now, if I get with Mary Alice and say, "Honey, I was wrong" or "You

were wrong" or "We were wrong," and we resolve the issue, then I can

believe me saying some things about marriage. But I won't ask my

audience to believe what I can't.

For me, this has meant giving up saying some things I would love to be

heard saying.

This also affects the references I can make. I have a private love of

literature, for instance, that for some reason I'm not able to get

across to people. It's not an area I can communicate believably, no

matter how interested I am. Perhaps it's my southern accent, perhaps

it's just personal style, but I'm much more effective using some of my

homespun common sense.

Nor can I, for example, use stories that have sexual overtones. There

are people who can use sexual material effectively. I can't.

I don't use politically oriented material because I'm not particularly

interested in politics. I would laugh at myself waving the flag and

making a Fourth of July speech.

I can't effectively use material that has to do with sudden

"miraculous" changes because I'm such a believer in process. While I

believe in the miracles of the Bible, I have difficulty teaching

people to expect them.

I can't be an inspirational speaker saying, "You can do anything you

think you can do ... and what the mind can conceive, the body can

perform." That just isn't me.

Nor am I able to preach effectively on prophecy. While I can listen to

others do it and appreciate their ability to do so, I can't do it

believably because I have so many personal misgivings. I would not

feel on solid ground. I'd have to quote someone else.

I want to be like Jesus as much as I can, "speaking as one having

authority." Unlike the scribes, who spent most of their time quoting

other authorities, Jesus spoke directly. He, of course, had divine

authority.

How do we establish our authority? As credible speakers, we've got to

establish some authority or there's no reason to listen to us.

You can establish your authority by being a researcher, a Bible

scholar, or a collector of scintillating anecdotes. You may have had

certain life experiences. But whatever your authority, you have to be

careful of extrapolation‑‑taking a principle from an area you know and

trying to apply it to an area you don't know.

Extrapolation is where most speakers show their ignorance, and it

undermines their genuine authority.

I believe I'm never ready

to speak for God unless

I'd rather somebody else do it.

I listen to some preachers extrapolate their knowledge into the

business world, and they do it well. Others, however, tell a business

story and they reveal how little they know about business.

A friend of mine was preaching and trying to relate to the sportsmen

in the congregation, so he told a story about ice fishermen in

Minnesota who were sitting in their huts catching muskies.

Afterward a man in the congregation told him, "That was a good story,

but they don't fish for muskies in the winter." My friend's attempt to

come across as "in the know" only showed the sportsmen he wasn't.

So I'm careful when I extrapolate. Did I stick to things I know? When

people see that I'm pretending to be familiar with something I'm not,

that hurts my believability.

Making my voice inconspicuous

Few speakers have great voices, but most have ones perfectly adequate

if people can understand the words. But I've found people are turned

off by preachers who have a seminary brogue, who have developed an

intellectual pronunciation, or who preach as if they were reciting

Shakespeare. I immediately say, "They're performing."

If I'm conscious of a speaker's voice after listening for two minutes,

then the voice has become a distraction. In the first two minutes,

people should make a decision about your voice and then think no more

about it. It's exactly like your clothing. When you stand up, if

people are conscious of your clothes after once seeing you, there's

something wrong with your clothes. You're either overdressed or

underdressed. You're not properly dressed to speak.

The same is true of the voice. It should come across as natural. But

there's more to it than that.

The voice should always contain some fire‑‑conviction, animation. Fire

in the voice means that the mind and the voice are engaged. There's a

direct relationship between an active mind and an active voice.

If you recite the nursery rhyme "Mary had a little lamb," you don't

have to engage your brain. Chances are you'll say it with a sing‑song

voice. The voice indicates what's going on in the mind.

In preaching it's important that the voice be in gear with the mind,

that it accurately represent the mind.

For example, if I am not really interested in a point I will leave it

out, because my voice will be flat. My voice will say, "This point

isn't important" no matter what my words say. It will tell the

audience I'm really not interested. If I try to fake it, those who are

sensitive will know it. So it's counterproductive to try to convince

people of a point your voice doesn't believe.

I like to listen to people say certain words. The way people say the

word God has always intrigued me. With some people, you can almost

feel the relationship. It's personal. With others, it's majestic. With

others, it's sharp or brittle. The fact that it is so different among

different people means there is a different relationship and the voice

is saying what the mind feels.

Sales people sometimes call this quality enthusiasm. I think it's more

than enthusiasm. Sometimes it will be awe or reverence. There are

times when the voice ought to halt in reverence before a word. You

don't do that like an actor. It's just that when the mind halts, the

voice ought to halt. The voice is truly a mirror of the mind.

Fire in the voice has nothing to do with having a good voice or a poor

voice. Some of the whiniest voices I've ever heard come from the best

speakers. But audiences will listen to a poor voice, as long as

there's fire, because as soon as the audience realizes the voice is

real, they adjust to it.

Using gestures effectively

Gestures have a vocabulary all their own. The Spanish painter Goya

charged as much to paint the hands as to paint the face, because the

hands are the most difficult of all parts of the body to paint.

Delsarte, back in the last century, studied for several years how the

hands show emotion. He got so good at it that he could sit in a park

and tell whether a baby was held by a maid or its mother by the

intensity of the hands.

I, too, have become interested in what hands say. When I watch a

speaker, I watch the hands. I want to see whether gestures are

spontaneous or programmed. I want to see whether the spontaneous

gestures are repetitious or varied. My friend Haddon Robinson has one

of the finest pairs of hands I know. I've tried to count the different

formations his hands make, and the number gets astronomical. Yet

they're absolutely spontaneous, and they're in harmony with what he's

saying and with the sound of his voice. He has a large vocabulary of

both gestures and words.

One of our former presidents could say something like "You know I love

you," but he would make a hacking gesture. Some psychiatrist friends

who used to watch him told me, "His hands tell you how much he really

loves you." You don't use a hacking motion with a genuine, spontaneous

expression of love.

Great music conductors, for example, will often not use a baton so

they can communicate more clearly. The orchestra can read their hands

better than the baton. The baton can give the beat or the accent, but

hands can give the nuance.

Many people will prophesy with their hands. They'll let you know

what's coming before they actually say it. The hands come alive before

the voice does. And people detect this even if they're not aware of

it.

Or you see somebody who points his finger at you like a pistol. You

never expect a real friendly statement after that. The teacher points

a finger at you and then reprimands you.

I've found speakers can't develop mastery of gestures quickly, but

they can give themselves permission to improve. Sometimes people don't

succeed because they're afraid to try. Any time we want to develop our

skills, we start by giving ourselves permission to grow.

With gestures, the key is simply to make sure they're spontaneous and

that they represent the voice and the mind. But give yourself

permission to let them vary and be expressive.

Here's one to start with. If you're going to be delivering a climactic

statement, instead of getting intense too soon, it's better to relax

your body and back away a half step from the audience. Then just

before you come into the climactic statement, step toward the audience

and straighten up. That way your body as well as your voice projects

the message.

Gestures also include giving people your eyes. In speaking, eyes are

almost as important as the voice. Everyone knows the importance of eye

contact, but the temptation I have is to zero in on a few people up

front who are attentive. Maybe I'm insecure, but it's easier to talk

to those people. I have to remind myself not to neglect those out on

the wings. Like the farmer who's feeding the chickens, you have to

throw the corn wide enough for everyone to get some. So I tell myself,

Remember the smaller chickens on the fringe. I want them to know I'm

thinking of them, too.

Remembering my limited knowledge

I remember an embarrassing situation one night at a business meeting

with a group of executives.

One man, who considered himself an authority on international oil

because he read the newspaper, was popping off about the oil situation

and how it could easily be resolved.

What he didn't know was that another man in the room had just returned

from chairing an international conference of major oil companies.

After the first fellow finished spouting off, proving his ignorance,

this man quietly but effectively showed him to be the fool he was.

I said to myself, I hope that never happens to me!

I left that meeting determined to make sure, in any speaking I do,

that I leave open the possibility that someone may be there who knows

an awful lot more about the subject than I do. The memory of that

business meeting has stayed in my mind and tempered many remarks I've

been tempted to make.

On the other hand, sometimes speakers are too impressed with who's in

the audience.

The other night I was in a church listening to the preacher when a

well‑known university president slipped into the sanctuary. The

preacher changed his style considerably; I could tell he was preaching

for the benefit of this one individual. He went from preaching to

giving an intellectual performance, trying to impress with his

learning. He seemed to forget the rest of the audience.

I couldn't be too critical, however, because at times I've done the

same thing. When some prominent person is present, the great

temptation is to speak to him alone. But that's prostitution. That's

spending other people's time simply to make a personal impression.

But as I sat listening to the preacher being overly influenced by this

university president, suddenly the thought occurred to me, Doesn't he

realize God is listening?

When God is listening, that's about as big a celebrity as anyone is

going to have. And isn't he always our ultimate audience?

So in the back of my mind, I always try to remember that God is

present. And if he isn't, maybe we ought to dismiss early.

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We need to:

1. Examine

Be aware

2. Diagnose

What's needed?

3. Prescribe

What's God saying?

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Preaching - How Well Do You Listen? - Date Originally Filed - 1/2001.101

"How Well Do You Listen?"

INTRODUCTION 1. During His earthly ministry, Jesus often concluded a

lesson by crying out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" a.

E.g., concerning John the Baptist ‑ - Mt 11:15 - Matthew

11:15} b. E.g., the parable of the sower ‑ - Mt 13:9 - Matthew

13:9} c. E.g., the explanation of the parable of the tares ‑

- Mt 13:43 - Matthew 13:43} 2. In His letters to the churches

of Asia, Jesus concludes each with a similar saying: "He who has an

ear. let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ‑ Re

- 2:7 - Matthew 2:7}, - 11 - Matthew

2:11}, - 17 - Matthew 2:17},29; - 3:6 - Matthew

3:6}, - 13 - Matthew 3:13},22 3. What is the point of these

sayings? a. It is akin to saying "What is being said is very

important, so you had better pay attention and listen!" ‑ cf.

- Mk 4:23‑25 - Mark 4:23‑25} b. It illustrates that Jesus had

a problem that often exists today 1) Many people simply don't listen

2) Or don't listen so as to understand 4. I am convinced that many

today don't appreciate the importance of listening well... a. It

concerned Jesus... b. So I believe it is appropriate to ask, "How Well

Do You Listen?" [It might be profitable to begin by pointing out there

are...] I. THREE TYPES OF LISTENERS A. THE "DULL OF HEARING"... 1.

Some of the Hebrew Christians were like this ‑ cf. He

- 5:11 - Mark 5:11} a. Note that when a person has this

problem, it is hard for others to explain things to them! b. The fault

is not with the "subject" material, nor the "presenter", but with the

"listener"! 2. Isaiah wrote of such people, and Jesus applied it to

many in His day ‑ - Mt 13:13‑15 - Matthew 13:13‑15} a. People

are this way because they are dull of heart! b. This prevents them

from: 1) Understanding God's truth 2) Turning from sin to God 3) And

being healed (saved) by God! ‑‑ Who would want to be this type of

listener? B. THOSE WITH "ITCHING EARS"... 1. Paul describes these in

- 2 Ti 4:3‑4 - 2 Timothy 4:3‑4} 2. Such people listen only to

that which is pleasing a. So they don't like "sound doctrine" (which

often requires the kind of preaching mentioned in - 2 Ti

4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2}) b. They will find the teachers they want...but

then they turn from the truth to fables ‑‑ Many today are often

afflicted with this "hearing" problem! C. THOSE WHO HEAR WITH "A NOBLE

AND GOOD HEART"... 1. Jesus speaks of these in - Lk

8:15 - Luke 8:15} 2. The Bereans were listeners of this kind ‑

- Ac 17:11 - Acts 17:11} a. They were "fair‑minded" (NKJV),

thus willing to give Paul a fair hearing b. It showed in how they

"received" (or listened to) the word: "with all readiness" ‑‑ This is

the kind of listener we all should be! [Why is it so important to be

this kind of listener? There are several reasons...] II. THE

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LISTENING A. ESSENTIAL TO BEING BLESSED... 1. For

those willing to listen properly, there are wonderful things to learn

‑ - Mt 13:16‑17 - Matthew 13:16‑17} 2. Many things which great

people (David, Daniel, etc.) did not have the opportunity to learn 3.

Things pertaining to wonderful blessings that are now available in

Christ! ‑ cf. - Ep 1:3 - Ephesians 1:3} ‑‑ We miss out on

these blessings if we do not carefully listen! B. ESSENTIAL TO SAVING

FAITH... 1. God has ordained that we be saved through faith in Christ

‑ cf. - Ro 1:16‑17 - Romans 1:16‑17} 2. Such faith comes

through proclaiming the gospel, often involving listening to a

preacher ‑ cf. - Ro 10:14 - Romans

10:14}, - 17 - Romans 10:17} 3. While one can certainly gain

faith through reading God's Word (cf. - Jn 20:30‑31 - John

20:30‑31}), the fact remains that many are often dependent upon what

they first hear proclaimed a. One reason faith is often lacking is

because people simply are not good listeners b. They miss out on the

evidence in God's Word which produces faith! ‑‑ Does your "listening"

hinder the development of your faith? C. ESSENTIAL TO BEARING FRUIT...

1. In the parable of the sower, the only kind of soil (heart) capable

of bearing fruit was the one which listened properly ‑ - Lk

8:15 - Luke 8:15} 2. That is because bearing fruit comes from

"understanding" the grace of God! ‑ cf. Co - 1:6 - Luke 1:6

a. Note that the gospel was bearing fruit in the Colossians b. But

that was "since the day you heard and knew (understood, NAS) the grace

of God in truth;" ‑‑ Only by listening well can we "understand" god's

grace, and be thus motivated to bear fruit to his glory! D. ESSENTIAL

TO PREVENTING APOSTASY... 1. There is a real danger of drifting, by

neglecting "so great a salvation" ‑ He - 2:1‑3 - Colossians

2:1‑3} 2. The only solution is to "give the more earnest heed to the

things we have heard" ‑‑ Poor listening is often the first step to

apostasy! E. ESSENTIAL TO AVOIDING REJECTION AND CONDEMNATION... 1. If

we do not listen as we should... a. Those who teach God's Word have a

right to reject us ‑ cf. - Mt 10:14‑15 - Matthew 10:14‑15} b.

We are judging ourselves unworthy of eternal life ‑ cf. - Ac

13:44‑49 - Acts 13:44‑49} 2. If we reject the gospel (perhaps by poor

listening?), the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South will

condemn us at the judgment! ‑ cf. - Mt 12:41‑42 - Matthew

12:41‑42} a. The men of Nineveh repented after hearing just one lesson

from Jonah; will we reject the gospel of Christ after being given many

opportunities? b. The queen of the South went great lengths to hear

the wisdom of Solomon; are we willing to go just a short distance to

hear God's Word proclaimed? ‑‑ The rejection and condemnation is not

limited to coming from just these individuals...it will come from God,

too! [Hopefully, we appreciate the wonderful opportunities we have to

be able to listen to God's Word, and the importance of good listening!

How then can we improve our ability to listen? For just as speakers

need to learn to speak so as to be understood, people need to learn to

listen so as to understand! Here are some ...] III. STEPS TO BETTER

LISTENING A. MAKE LISTENING AN ACT OF WORSHIP... 1. How you listen to

God's word being read or preached is as much an indication of your

devotion to God as to how you pray or sing 2. So when you have

opportunities to listen, do it with "a worshipful attitude" a. Think

of how you would listen if some great person were speaking b. Imagine

your rapt attention if you were listening to some famous person ‑‑

Does not the proclamation of God's Word deserve as much attention? B.

LISTEN FROM FIRST TO LAST... 1. I.e., pay attention all the way

through a. Do you expect to understand a novel by simply reading a

sentence here and there? b. So it is with listening...sentences,

phrases, words, to be understood must be heard in light of the context

in which they are presented 2. Speakers must follow certain rules of

speech so as to be understood: a. Introduce the subject b. Present

main points with supporting arguments c. Conclude with a summary ‑‑ So

listeners must listen to ALL the parts to truly understand C. LOOK AT

THE SPEAKER... 1. This greatly aids your concentration a. Looking

elsewhere makes it easy for your mind to wander b. Closing your eyes

makes it easy for you to nod off! 2. This requires self‑discipline,

but it is conducive to developing a longer attention span ‑‑ Try it,

and see if it doesn't make a difference! D. READ ALONG IN YOUR

BIBLE... 1. You remember more of what you both see and hear over what

you simply hear a. Which is why visual aids are often used in sermons

b. But the greatest visual aid is your own Bible! 2. Your knowledge of

the Scriptures can be greatly improved by doing this 3. It is hard at

first to keep up, but persevere and it will soon become easier ‑‑ We

encourage our children to do this, shouldn't adults provide an example

and do the same? E. LISTEN WITH FAITH... 1. I.e., listen with a

willingness to accept and believe what is shown in God's Word 2.

Notice He - 4:1‑2 - Jonah 4:1‑2 - those who died in the

wilderness did not listen with faith! ‑‑ If we don't listen "with

faith," the same sort of thing will happen to us; i.e., fall short of

our heavenly rest! F. LISTEN WITH A MIND TO ACT... 1. Are we like the

people in Ezekiel's day? ‑ cf. - Eze 33:30‑32 - Ezekiel

33:30‑32} a. They loved to hear him, but for the wrong reason b. Do we

love to hear sermons because of how well the speaker presents them? 2.

Hearing must be accompanied by doing to be of any profit ‑

- Ja 1:22‑25 - James 1:22‑25} ‑‑ As important as good

listening may be, the blessedness comes only if we are doers as well

as hearers! CONCLUSION 1. To be blessed in what we do... a. That is my

goal in presenting these thoughts on listening b. For it all begins

with listening in the proper way 2. How important, then, is listening?

a. When it comes to listening to God, very important! ‑ - Isa

55:2‑3 - Isaiah 55:2‑3} b. It is essential for the good of our soul! 3.

Is there ever a time when GOD does not listen? a. Yes, when our sins

are between us and God ‑ cf. - Isa 59:1‑2 - Isaiah 59:1‑2} b.

But we can take care of that problem by receiving God's Mercy ‑ cf.

- Isa 55:6‑7 - Isaiah 55:6‑7} Today, that mercy is offered

through Jesus Christ, God's Son. And as God said: "This is My beloved

Son. Hear Him!" ( - Lk 9:35 - Luke 9:35}) Have you heeded Him

by obeying His word? Or does the following cry of Jesus apply to

you...? "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things

which I say?" ( - Luke 6:46 - Luke 6:46})

http://www.bible.ca/eo/top/listen.htm

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10 Things to Do with a Sermon - Preaching - How to Listen

Date Originally Filed - 3/2001.101

Viewpoint: Ten things to do with a sermon

Gordon Matties

Most people forget most sermons by the middle of the week. Recently

someone told me he'd just as soon sit in the car and read a good book

as listen to a sermon.

As an occasional preacher, I find these are forbidding thoughts.

What's more, even if I think everyone is listening, I can't speak to

everyone's situation every time.

So did I waste my Saturday preparing that sermon on repentance? Why

not simply offer people a thought‑byte or two? Instead of 20 minutes

on John the Baptist's

call to repentance, I could have given them my 55‑word synthesis of

Matthew's repentance theme to post on their refrigerator door in the

hope that it would edify

them throughout the week.

But that wouldn't be a sermon. And I don't suppose most congregations

are about to replace sermons with a thought for the week.

Our problem is that most of us have grown up listening to sermons

without ever knowing what we were to be listening for. Preachers have

countless resources for

how to prepare, construct and deliver sermons. Yet I've never read

anything on how to listen to a sermon.

I suggest, therefore, that it's time for the congregation to take some

responsibility for the sermon. To assume that it's up to the preacher

to communicate effectively

with us is asking too much if we're not willing to work at listening.

We listeners have to create a way of entering the sermon, especially

when the sermon doesn't

create an easy entry point for us.

If we listen well, we will share the burden of sermon preparation and

delivery. Making the sermon "ours" will mean that we will have less to

criticize after walking out

the door. Active listening may even help us discover that sermons are

rather good food for body and soul.

Listening well is learning to pay attention

Simone Weil, in her book Waiting for God, suggests that paying

attention is the virtue that trains us in prayer. Listening well is a

spiritual discipline. Since we're not

likely to change every sermon to suit the tastes and needs of every

one of us, the best strategy is to change the way each of us listens.

That way, we become as

responsible for what we "take" from a sermon as preachers are for what

they "give" us. Rather than seeing ourselves as an audience, why not

become partners in the

sermon? The sermon can then be a responsive part of worship‑‑a

"service" that we all offer to God rather than a speech telling us

what we ought to do or feel.

Listening well involves using the imagination

What you hear is not the same as what's been spoken. No sermon can get

into your head, your experience or your heart unless you do something.

Only you can

open your mind or heart to the Spirit. You can actively invite the

newness and nurture that God wishes to bring into your life by His

Word. Let me explain:

1. Listen from within your experience. Bring all of who you are and

put it on the table: work, love, children, friendships, loneliness,

fear, addiction, anger.

Whatever your life experience, whether joy or pain, whether stability

or disorientation, find a crack somewhere into which your imagination

can slip. Then push at

what you hear, as though it is a wedge. As a crack opens a space in

the sermon, imagine what you might say, if given an opportunity, to

fill out what you need to hear

so that the sermon can touch your experience.

2. Imagine your way into the sermon's agenda. Among other things, a

preacher may be trying to change our minds, move us to commitment,

invite us to act in the

light of the gospel or nurture our relationship with God. Yet many

sermons don't begin by telling us those things. Imagine what the

sermon wants to do. What

outcomes are necessary for this sermon to have been successful in

accomplishing its purpose?

3. Imagine yourself rewriting the sermon. One person, the preacher,

cannot be master of the biblical text. Sermons are always submitted to

the congregation for

discernment. A sermon offers only one voice; you must add your own.

Ask yourself What does this text mean for me today? How would I put

that into words if I

were preaching? What would I add? What would I omit? What would I

change?

4. Imagine an illustration. Some congregations offer people time to

respond to every sermon. Sometimes people stand to share an

illustration that puts a unique

spin on the sermon, or that provides a concrete example of an abstract

idea from the sermon. Even if you can't do that publicly, imagine your

own story that

demonstrates the truth you are hearing.

5. Imagine a piece of music or artwork you know that offers a window

into what you are hearing. Imagine using that piece as an object

lesson for the

congregation, explaining how this work embodies the biblical text or

sermon.

6. Imagine people you know. Are there people who embody the virtues

highlighted in the sermon? Are there people whose lives might be

touched with the healing

and hope you are hearing? Listen for how you might channel grace to

others because of what you are hearing.

7. Imagine what response the sermon is calling you to make. Ask how

the theology in the text or sermon challenges or supports what you've

always thought to

be true, right, good or beautiful. Imagine being wrong. What would

need to change about your behaviour? What should change in your

attitudes?

Not all sermons move toward a decision. You may wish to make that

imaginative move yourself. As a result of the sermon, what action is

called for? When will you

begin to act on what you have decided? What first steps will you take?

8. Imagine hearing the text from the underside. Sermons often identify

with a central character, or a person in charge. Imagine the text from

the side of what's left

out, or who's left out. What insight would you offer from that vantage

point in the text? What could you add to the sermon without denying

the different perspective

of the preacher?

9. Imagine a New World in which what you hear is truly practised.

Jesus called this "seeking the kingdom". Ask yourself what hinders

your wholehearted search for

the kingdom. What prevents you from acting out that vision in your

life?

10. Now it's your turn I invite readers to make suggestions for active

sermon listening and send them to me. Perhaps we'll include a list of

these suggestions in a

future issue of the Herald.

Active listening puts an end both to silence and to criticism. It

frees us to interact with the preacher in a healthy way because we

become responsible for what we

hear. Listening is hard work. It requires an imagination that moves us

beyond the words we hear from the front. Disciplined and creative

listening will change us, for

in listening we practise what Paul recommends‑‑that we offer our

bodies and allow our minds to be transformed ( - Romans

12:1‑2 - Romans 12:1‑2}). To listen actively is to turn the

sermon into a prayer in the presence of God's transforming Spirit.

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Preaching - Best Sermons into Tracts - Extend the Life of Your Sermons with Tracts" by Roscoe Barnes Iii.

Date Originally Filed - 3/2001.101

Turning your best sermons into tracts

April 2001 issue

Ministry section

"Extend the life of your sermons with tracts" by Roscoe Barnes III.

Pulpit Helps, Dec 2000 (Vol 25, No 12). Page 24. Topic: evangelism.

You pour hours and hours into preparing a sermon and spend half an

hour preaching it, only to wonder just how long the message will have

any impact. Have you ever wondered how to give your ideas some

permanence? Try writing your sermons down in the form of a tract.

Tracts are a powerful way to communicate timeless messages. Almost

everyone entertains the idea of writing a book at some point, but

tracts have certain advantages. Tracts are often more appealing to

readers than are lengthy books. They can be written quickly and

published inexpensively, reaching a wider audience than a book could.

The late John R. Rice, for example, put his sermon "What Must I Do to

Be Saved?" into print. To date more than 44 million copies of this

tract have been printed, with over 10,000 claiming to come to Christ

through that booklet within the space of one month.

Many powerful sermons have been handed down through the years via

tracts. Jonathan Edwards' sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry

God," written hundreds of years ago, is still touching souls today in

tract form.

Would you like to share an important message that could outlast

you for generations? Write your sermons into tracts!

Topics: Evangelism;Preaching;Sermons;Writing

http://www.navpress.com/cttFullArticle.asp?WriArt=DPD0000202001April

http://www.navpress.com/ctt/view\_article.asp?articleID=13482&tbvw=SEC&S

ectionID=Ministry

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Preaching - Martin Luther King Jr.'s

Date Originally Filed - 3/2001.101

King of the pulpit: a model for preaching

April 2001 issue

Ministry section

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s preaching as a resource for preachers" by

Richard Lischer. Journal for Preachers, Easter 2000 (Vol 23, No 3).

Pages 18‑22. Topic: preaching.

Martin Luther King Jr. remains an inspiration for young African

American preachers, but he is rarely studied by students of

homiletics. Much of King's oratorical talent can only be fully

understood in the unique context of the civil rights movement. Today's

social ills are more likely to be addressed by governmental economic

adjustments than by religiously inspired exhortations to protest that

would involve personal sacrifice.

King's homiletical practices aren't at all like today's preaching

methods. He wasn't conversational in style. He hardly ever used humor,

a low road to audience entertainment. While King's oratory delighted

his listeners, he chose the higher goal of moving his audience,

changing their hearts and behaviors.

King organized his sermons around a handful of universal themes

including the destiny of man, the importance of love, and the

greatness of God. Self‑disclosure hardly ever played into his sermons.

When he did talk about himself, he did so as a dignified public

persona.

Finally, King differed from contemporary preachers in his approach

to the Bible. He eschewed higher textual criticism, choosing to step

allegorically into Scripture to describe the principles of civil

rights and social justice.

In many ways, though, King serves as an excellent resource for

modern preachers. Listening to tapes of King's sermons, one realizes

that he was absolutely bone‑tired when he preached. He was determined

to preach, though, even after marathon negotiating sessions, bombings,

and the myriad problems of the civil rights movement. He did so not

only from a sense of duty, but because it revitalized him.

King is also a model for today's preachers in the way in which he

pursued poetry and art in his preaching, even when he was away from

the spotlight. He used illustrations and metaphors to demonstrate the

link between Scripture and the lives of oppressed people. King took

language to its heights, whether he was preaching on the national

platform or speaking to his home congregation.

Topics: Preaching;Black churches;Sermons,

effective;Blacks;Sermons;Bible interpretation;Bible, interpreting the

> Bible interpretation;Interpretation, biblical > Bible

interpretation;Homiletics > Preaching;Churches, black > Black churches

Original Source: Journal for Preachers

http://www.navpress.com/cttFullArticle.asp?WriArt=DPD0000152001April

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Stories We Hear, the Stories We Tell by Richard Frazier.

March 2000 issue

Ministry section

- 3/2001.101

Preaching and the retelling of stories

March 2000 issue

Ministry section

"The stories we hear, the stories we tell" by Richard Frazier.

Quarterly Review, Fall 1999 (Vol 19, No 3). Pages 184‑197. Topic:

storytelling. See also Oct99‑6a.

Most preachers use stories in their sermons. They appear as anecdotes,

attention‑getters, or illustrations. They are hung on the sermonic

tree like Christmas lights offering something beautiful to look at,

but not necessarily providing much light.

Too many stories are sentimental, shallow, moralizing and

unsatisfying. Good stories, on the other hand, raise questions,

address the complexities of life, invite exploration, and offer

surprise. Robert Coles says that the great storytellers use stories to

hold up a mirror to reveal hypocrisy and the shallowness of society.

They also depict real people struggling with their own conflicts.

Sometimes these stories are open‑ended, refusing to offer an easy

answer. Frequently they address the main themes of the sermon. They

may do so using a variety of literary forms, including metaphor,

aphorisms and proverbs, parables, parallelism, and dialectic.

The parable is one of the most popular forms of storytelling,

perhaps because Jesus used it so frequently. A parable, called by some

an extended metaphor, is invitational and subversive. That is, it is a

story that invites the listener to participate, that engages the

listener with his or her own experience, an experience of a world that

is familiar. But it is subversive in that the story then shifts to a

different world which functions with an alien set of principles. In

parables, things are not always as the appear.

The preacher can improve his preaching by sharpening his ability

to see a parable as it occurs in literature, film, or even the

everyday happenings of life. The story doesn't need to have a strand

of piety to it; it is better if it doesn't.

We are taught to preach in a way that people have something

concrete to take home with them. It would be better if we preached in

a way that people had something abstract to take home with them. You

can't do much with the concrete, but with images there is a lot of

flex room. They will continue to work in the mind and heart of the

audience long after the benediction has been pronounced.

Therefore, the preacher is well‑advised to pay attention to the

form of the story as well as its content. One might start by asking a

series of questions about the stories in the sermon: What will my

audience hear? Is the story open‑ended so that it invites discussion?

Will my audience relate to the characters or the situation? What is

the tension in this story? What are the metaphors? Does it work with

surprise or irony? In what way is it subversive? Does it leave a

visual image? Can God use this story and my telling of it?

Topics: Storytelling;Illustrations, sermon;Sermons,

effective;Preaching;Narrative;Homiletics > Preaching;Preaching,

narrative > Narrative;Sermon preparation;Culture and religion;Religion

in the U.S.;Jews;AntiSemitism;Harassment, religious;Hate crimes

Original Source: Quarterly Review

http://www.navpress.com/cttFullArticle.asp?WriArt=TFM0000072000March

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Preaching - Getting Your Class To Talk

Date Originally Filed - 4/2001.101

Getting Your Class To Talk

by Rob Steed Australia's Small Group Guru

Helping class members to talk is an important part of successful class

time.

The success of a class is very dependent on the teacher's ability to

facilitate good discussion. The class that effectively discusses the

lesson is more likely to enjoy a study that is practical, supportive

and interesting. A key ingredient as to whether such discussion occurs

is the ability of the class members to communicate effectively.

The following actions help promote good communication in a class.

1. Respond Actively: When someone makes comment of asks a question

respond actively. Often immature (low level of communication) classes

allow members' disclosures to pass by without response. They may not

understand what has been said or they may disagree. When this happens

the person disclosing will often withdraw, feeling that nobody is

interested in their viewpoint. 2. Listen to what's Happening: Class

members will know whether others are listening or not (body language).

By looking interested physically people are encouraged to share more

fully. Groups are most effective when all members take interest in all

interactions and feel free to enter and assist in others' dialogues.

3. Take Risks in Self‑Disclosure: Self‑disclosure breeds more

self‑disclosure. For example ? "I would like to begin our study today

regarding prayer by sharing with you an experience..." Taking the risk

to share personally encourages others to do the same. The result being

that trust builds and members feel confident to share more at a

personal level.

4. Encourage Others Self‑disclosure: Give recognition to others when

they share their ideas and experiences. Praise encourages the reticent

to contribute even further.

5. Enter Ongoing Conversations Appropriately: Showing involvement by

joining in conversations builds class communication. However, avoid

disrupting the conversation by refocusing the conversation. Your right

to involvement is based on you contributing to the conversation.

6. Ask for Feedback: Seeking other members views rather than accepting

one viewpoint enriches the discussion. For example ? "That is an

interesting point of view how do others feel about this " The more

views expressed the better the quality of discussion and interest.

7. Seat the class for communication: How the class is seated will

either encourage or handicap good discussion. A circle is the most

conducive to discussion. All members of the class need to be able to

see each others faces. The more the teacher models effective

communication skills the more other class members will follow.

Question That Facilitate Discussion

A key part of any good lesson discussion is asking good questions.

Most of us if we work long enough at it can develop good questions.

Don't ask: "Too personal" questions too early in the life of the

class. Personal questions are vital as trust builds but timing is

important.

Don't ask long involved questions. Keep them short and concise. In

other words one question at a time.

Don't be afraid of silence. A good question will require some time for

people to think through before giving an answer.

Don't ask closed questions. Yes and no answers do not lead to

discussion and sharing. Open ended questions are best.

Do share your own experience as this encourages others, Questions that

get to a personal level facilitate a more practical discussion.

Do ask questions that have some relevance to people's lives. Questions

that are trivial frustrate most people

Do clarify your question when asked.

Don't rush in with your own answer out of nervousness.

Do allow other group members to ask questions. The teacher doesn't

have sole rights to asking questions.

http://www.joshhunt.com/getting\_your\_class\_to\_talk.htm

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Making Class Interesting When the Passage is Boring by Josh Hunt

Making Class Interesting When

- 4/2001.101

Making Class Interesting When the Passage is Boring

by Josh Hunt

All scripture is inspired by God. All scripture is equally inspired by

God. But it is not all equally inspiring! Let's face it, some passages

are a pretty hard read. Harder still to create a stimulating

discussion. Here are some tips to make class interesting when the

passage is boring.

Relax

The Bible was written over a long period of time to a variety of

people with a variety of needs. Some passages were not really written

for us, and it makes sense that they do not apply to us directly. We

can be thankful we have these passage and appreciative of their

God‑inspired quality while candidly acknowledging that they are not as

inspiring as some other parts of the Bible

Class visioning, organization, evaluation and health

When the text is boring, you might spend a little extra time on issues

related to the class, but not related to the text. Spend some time

evaluating how the group feels about your experience together. Set

some goals. Cast a vision. Get organized. Plan some fellowships. Get

as many people with roles and tasks as you can. Get an inreach leader,

outreach leader, fellowship leader, etc.

Group Life

Group life has two goals: to get to know the Bible and to get to know

one another. When the passage is boring, spend a little time getting

to know one another. Have one person each week share their testimony,

or let the group get to interview them.

Quiet time accountability

I was talking to a friend the other day about how I love my life. I

work out of a home office and am self‑employed. I get up on my own,

take a bath and show up for work without a boss. I love it. I am one

of those people for whom work is more fun than play. I tend to have to

discipline myself to play with my kids more than I discipline myself

to do my work. My friend looked me in the eye and said, "I could never

do what you do. If I tired I would sleep in, read the sports page,

watch CNN, fritter around and next thing you know it would be 11:30

and I wouldn't have done a thing." Then he looked at me and said, "And

I think more people are like me than like you." I think he is right.

Most people need external forms of accountability. They need people to

ask them from time to time, "What are you and God talking about these

days? What have you read in your quiet time?" If the passage is

boring, you could spend some time on this with great profit.

Teach the topic

Sometimes you can summarize the meaning of the passage into a Biblical

principle and talk about that principle. In Leviticus you might derive

a principle about holiness or worship or atonement and talk about that

topic.

Teach cross references and related passages

"This reminds me of another passage. . ." And off you go to that other

passage!

Zoom in: Look for details in the text

Sometimes one work is enough to create a good lesson. I have done a

whole sermon on the word "beloved." From a homiletical viewpoint it

was not one of my best, but it sure was well received. There is a

passage in one of the gospels that says, "Go, tell the disciples and

Peter. . ." There is a great lesson in those two words, "and Peter."

Take it as a challenge

I have talked to snow skiers who see themselves as expert skiers

except, "I don't sky powder well, and mogals kind of trip me up and

everyone hates ice and steep slopes are not my forte and, and, and. .

." The deal is, this is snow skiing. It is about mogals and steep

slopes and powder and so on. If you can't ski that, you can't ski.

Teachers are sometimes the same way. They can do a bang up job in

- Philippians 2 - Philippians 2}, but drop them in the middle

of Numbers somewhere and they are outta here. Take it as a challenge.

You are a good teacher. Good teachers make difficult passages

interesting.

Zoom out ‑ teach the context

Lots of believers know the stories of the Bible, but they do not know

the story of the Bible. Spend some time putting the difficult passage

in context of the whole Bible story.

Fake it

Don't tell them this is a boring passage and don't be bored yourself.

Find something to get excited about. If you are enthusiastic, the

people will be to even if this is a difficult passage. I think it is a

sin to bore people with the gospel. Get excited about something.

Punt

If worse come to worse, punt. Don't teach the boring passage. Set

aside the literature. Teach something else. Far better to do that than

to bore people with the gospel. The number one problem in the American

Sunday School is boredom. Don't be part of the problem. Pray Ask God

why he put this passage in there. Ask Him what He would have you teach

His children. Ask for the meaning behind the passage. Ask for wisdom.

Ask for ability. Ask for enthusiasm.

http://www.joshhunt.com/MakingBoringInteresting.htm

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Preaching - Using teamwork in sermon prep

Date Originally Filed - 6/2001.101

Using teamwork in sermon preparation

"Sermon research teams" by Brad Johnson. Growing Churches, Fall 2000

(Vol 11, No 1). Pages 5‑7. Topic: sermon preparation. See also

Mar00‑24a. Topic: SERMON PREPARATION

Preparing weekly sermons isn't always a delightful task. Often it's

arduous and frustrating. However, Brad Johnson, teaching pastor and

minister of missions at Saddleback Valley Community Church, has

discovered that planning sermons together with other pastors has

enhanced the process for him.

When pastors plan sermons together, iron sharpens iron and offers

the benefits of accumulated variety, wit, and wisdom that paves the

way for clear and effective presentation. Such sharing keeps pastors

from getting in sermon ruts and provides a practical time‑saver for

already cramped schedules. It also affords lots of free research as

everyone willingly shares his personal resources.

Pastors interested in participating in such sermon research teams

should look for like‑minded colleagues who are willing to commit to

the plan, can mutually respect each other, be obedient to the Holy

Spirit's direction as they plan, and share their best material

(articles, Scripture references, and humor) freely. Before they meet,

they should bathe their potential plans and sermon possibilities in

prayer, asking for the Spirit's guidance and leading. Pastors should

then share a one‑day retreat to discuss ideas for their sermons, which

should be planned as a sermon series for the year. Weekly meetings to

discuss specific sermon needs will follow.

Such sharing allows each person to contribute his greatest

strength. One may be an excellent outliner; another may contribute

humor. Combining everyone's strengths contributes to the most

effective sermons. Also, the fact that the sermon series is planned

well in advance affords worship leaders, actors, and technicians

adequate opportunity to augment the sermons with appropriate music,

drama, and lighting.

This type of sermon preparation may not be for everyone. However,

those who try it will experience rich fellowship and support as they

pray and perhaps counsel together. They will also find sermon

preparation to be less of a burden and more of a blessing.

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ectionID=Ministry

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Preaching Preparation - Date Originally Filed - 6/2001.101

Sermon prep as theological process

"The theological process in sermon preparation" by Timothy Warren.

Bibliotheca Sacra, Jul‑Sep 1999 (Vol 156, No 623). Pages 336‑356.

Topic: sermon preparation. See also x3017 and May99‑17b. Topic: SERMON

PREPARATION

Expository preaching has three components. First, the text is

examined; then the theological principle emerging from the text is

defined; and finally, the application to the listener is announced.

This means that the goal of preaching is to create a bridge between

the text and the listener by means of a homiletical process. Two

worlds are thus involved: the world of the text and the world of the

contemporary audience. The preacher must know both.

There are three elements in this bridge‑building process:

stylizing, theologizing, and organizing.

Stylizing. This involves moving from "technical exegetical

language to general theological language." A technical approach might

use words like "parallelism" and discuss rhetorical context and

narrative elements of the text. When all of the technical elements

have been stated, it is then time for the preacher to attempt to put

these concepts into understandable English without the esoteric

jargon.

Theologizing. The next step is to take the principle of the

text and begin to do the theological work it suggests. The preacher

now is looking for the universal and timeless principle of the text.

This task involves three theological initiatives:

Biblical theologizing moves the preacher beyond the text to the

big picture or metanarrative. The question is not, What does the text

say? but, What does the text mean? To get to this, the preacher must

interpret and identify how the author may have understood the message

in terms of his own worldview. Thematic issues will soon emerge. In

Genesis, for example, biblical theologizing will quickly spot the

themes of blessing and cursing. Other questions can then follow: who,

why, when?

Canonical theologizing places the text within the larger unit of

Scripture itself, seeking to discover the connections between the text

and other relevant passages. When the parameters of the text are

expanded, the meaning is likewise amplified. Thus, an examination of

- Hab. 2:4 - Habakkuk 2:4} would move the preacher away from

Habakkuk to - Ro. 1:17 - Romans 1:17}, - Gal.

3:11 - Galatians 3:11}, and - Heb. 10:38 - Hebrews 10:38}.

Systematic theologizing tests the conclusions of the work in

progress against the standards of coherence, comprehensiveness,

adequacy, and consistency. One's conclusions, in other words, must

make sense, must represent all of Scripture, must be the preferred

explanation of the text, and must mesh with all of biblical truth.

Theologizing, of whatever type, requires other skills such as

bracketing, validating, and principlizing. Bracketing is a technique

whereby the interpreter suspends, or brackets, previous notions about

the text in order to approach the text with fresh perspective.

Validating calls for rational skills which seek to justify the

proposition or conclusions of the text. Principlizing is the skill of

stating a theological message in a universal and timeless form.

Organizing. Having done the exegetical and theological work,

the preacher now presents the material in a logical format. One takes

the exegetical outline and transforms it‑‑based on the theological

work on the text‑‑into a coherent outline.

To summarize, the three components of sermon preparation are

exegetical, theological, and homiletical; i.e., the preacher

determines what the text says, what it means, and what it means to us.

This work involves stylizing, theologizing, and organizing. Preaching

requires skills; skills require continual sharpening.

http://www.navpress.com/ctt/view\_article.asp?articleID=15908&tbvw=SEC&S

ectionID=Ministry

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Preaching - Nonverbal preaching

Date Originally Filed - 6/2001.101

Nonverbal preaching

"Preaching is more than words" by Wayne McDill. Preaching, NovDate Originally Filed - ec

1999 (Vol 15, No 3). Pages 43‑49. Topic: communication, effective. See

also x3011 and Oct99‑14a. Topic: COMMUNICATION, EFFECTIVE

Preaching is not just about words. Clearly, words are an important

part of oral communication, but not the most important part. Studies

show that 65% of communication is received through channels other than

words. Moreover, most listeners tend to judge the effectiveness of a

speech or sermon in terms of delivery, and not content. Nonverbal

channels of communication such as body language, gestures, and facial

expressions are often more important than the verbal channel. The

listener who cannot see the speaker does not grasp the message as

clearly as those who can.

Platform movement. Some preachers seems glued to the pulpit.

It renders a certain stiffness to their delivery. Yet moving about on

the platform can be distracting, too, especially if the movement is

nothing more than pacing. It is best to establish a "home base" near

the center of the platform; any movement away from this point should

be purposeful and arise out of the content of the sermon itself.

Gestures. Effective gestures reinforce rather than contradict

what is being said. Sometimes simple gestures can be used in the

absence of a verbal message. Most of the time, gestures complement

what is being said. Gestures can also be used for the sake of emphasis

and to regulate or control the interaction with the audience.

Facial expression. Many preachers seem to preach without

expression. When this happens, the preaching seems lifeless because

the face of the preacher is lifeless. Preachers think they are showing

facial expression, but by the time the expression hits the face, it

has disappeared. This is why practicing in front of a mirror helps a

preacher see what the audience sees.

Eye contact. A speaker who looks at you is saying that you

are the object of his attention. Eye contact with the audience

establishes a relationship with the audience, thus opening

communication, creating rapport, and making the preacher more

believable. It also serves to keep the audience interested.

Voice signals. The way a preacher uses his voice is called

paralanguage. It includes tone of voice, pitch, rate, and volume. The

key point here is to inject variety.

While nonverbal cues do not comprise the whole sermon, they

usually make the difference between a sermon that works and one that

doesn't.

http://www.navpress.com/ctt/view\_article.asp?articleID=15909&tbvw=SEC&S

ectionID=Ministry

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Preaching - Tips For Preachers -- 9/2001.101

Some Things You May Have

Wanted To Know About Your

Preacher . . . But Never

Bothered To Ask

By Glann M. Lee

Introduction:

Scriptures:

- Rom. 10:13‑17 - Romans 10:13‑17}.

- 2 Tim. 4:1‑8 - 2 Timothy 4:1‑8}.

Preaching the gospel is the most wonderful privilege.

Of all callings God could have called upon His Son to pursue, He chose

that Jesus be a preacher.

Matthew Henry observed that "the ministry is the best calling but the

worst trade in the world."

Discussion:

Preacher Categories.

Those forgotten.

They had little influence on us.

They "squandered" precious time and opportunities.

Those never forgiven.

They were harsh and failed in communicating.

They may be looked upon in "after years" in pity.

Those never forgotten.

They cared.

They prepared.

They shared (communicated).

Preacher Effectiveness.

Know the Master.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true

God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." - John

17:3 - John 17:3}.

Effective teachers practice what they preach.

- 1 Tim. 4:16 - 1 Timothy 4:16}.

- 2 Tim. 2:2 - 2 Timothy 2:2}.

Know the message.

They prepare.

- 2 Tim. 2:15 - 2 Timothy 2:15}.

- James 3:1 - James 3:1}.

One cannot teach what one does not know.

Know the mission.

They share.

- Lk. 19:10 - Luke 19:10}.

Christ died to purchase the church. - Acts 20:28 - Acts

20:28}.

The gospel is to be preached to all. - Matt.

28:18‑20 - Matthew 28:18‑20}.

Know the methods.

They care.

Know people (human nature).

Know possibilities (mold souls for eternity).

The parable of the soils shows that not all are alike.

- Matt. 13 - Matthew 13 - - Lk 8 - Luke 8}.

- Rom. 12:18 - Romans 12:18}.

Know problems (challenges).

Know mercy.

They know charity (love).

They know compassion.

Privileges (Joys) Of Preaching.

The preacher is dealing with one's most precious possession ‑ one's

soul.

- Matt. 16:26 - Matthew 16:26}.

- Mk. 8:36 - Mark 8:36}.

- Mk. 2:5 - Mark 2:5}.

- 3 John 2 - 3 John 1:2}.

Preaching is God's choice for His scheme of redemption.

- Matt. 28:18‑20 - Matthew 28:18‑20}.

- 1 Cor. 1:17‑22 - 1 Corinthians 1:17‑22}.

- 2 Tim. 2:2 - 2 Timothy 2:2}.

- 2 Cor. 4:7 - 2 Corinthians 4:7}.

Jesus was the master preacher / teacher.

- John 3:1 - John 3:1}ff.

- Matt. 4:17 - Matthew 4:17}.

- Acts 1:1 - Acts 1:1}.

Problems Of Preachers.

Demands.

Administrator, organizer, counselor, visitor, teacher, preacher, etc.

Limited time.

"Double standard" expectations.

Often "higher standards" are expected of the wife.

Children may feel they are in a "fish bowl".

Defeats. (frustrations ‑ setbacks) .

Desire to do more.

Indifference of times, members, etc.

Disappointments.

Members may not understand the work of the preacher.

Members / community may have unrealistic expectations.

Defense ("Security") problems.

Housing, retirement, moving, expenses.

Limited periods of usefulness.

Depreciation of self.

Not accept own limitations.

Too hard on self.

Preachers God Approves.

Preachers of the gospel/truth.

- 1 Pet. 4:11 - 1 Peter 4:11}.

- Gal. 1:8‑10 - Galatians 1:8‑10}.

Balanced preaching. - Acts 20:20 - Acts 20:20},

- 27 - Acts 20:27}.

Preaching that exalts Christ.

- Gal. 6:14 - Galatians 6:14}.

- Acts 8:1 - Acts 8:1}ff.

Proper presentation.

- Eph. 4:15 - Ephesians 4:15}.

- Matt. 7:12 - Matthew 7:12}.

Personal example/preaching.

- 1 Cor. 11:1 - 1 Corinthians 11:1}.

- 1 Tim. 4:16 - 1 Timothy 4:16}.

Projection (world wide) preaching.

- Matt. 28:18‑20 - Matthew 28:18‑20}.

- Mk. 16:15‑16 - Mark 16:15‑16}.

Conclusion:

You have the power to "make or break" the preacher.

Criticism.

Constructive or destructive?

Sandwich criticism between compliments.

Cooperate.

Commission to preacher / teach.

Pray for the preacher.

http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/1999/mar/page19.shtml

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Preaching - Using Illustrations - 9/2001.101

Using Illustrations in Your Teaching

by Ron Rule

Whether you are teaching a Sunday school class, speaking at AWANA,

sharing at a bible study or preaching a sermon, the use of

illustrations can be a vital part of your ministry. This article will

focus on a bit of the how and why of illustrations.

Some have thought that illustrations are simply an attempt by teachers

and preachers to cater and compete with a TV entertained society. The

average adult who spends fifty hours a year in a pew, will spend two

thousand hours at home watching television. Some estimate that the

average American child will spend more time watching television before

entering school than they will spend listening to their parents in

their entire lifetime.

Illustrations are a vital part of learning and remembering. Think back

to a sermon or a Sunday school lesson where you can still clearly

remember something that you learned. Do you remember a series of

abstract theological concepts presented in logically sound statements

of scriptural premises and conclusions, or do you remember a well

illustrated lesson.

Scripture is full of stories and accounts that illustrate the truth

being taught. Christ taught with parables. Much of the language of

scripture is figurative and illustrative rather than literal. In

- Genesis 1:4 - Genesis 1:4} we read "And God saw the light,

that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness." Here

we have both a literal description of creation and figurative picture

of good and evil.

We seem to learn best by experience, and illustrations are ways for

someone to vicariously experience a learning experience. The listener

becomes involved in imaginative or sympathetic participation in the

experience of another with the very emotions that are involved. Take

the account of the Prodigal Son. Does scripture give a detailed

description of the fathers FEELINGS of love for his returning son? NO

not really, instead it describes what the father DOES: he sees his son

a long way off, runs out to meet him, and falls on his neck to kiss

him. Your own past experience and feelings come to mind as you hear

the story and the love of the father is communicated to your heart.

One vital aspect of using illustrations is that they be used in a way

that the listener remembers not only the illustration, but the lesson

being taught. The following section is an example of an illustration

that paints a vivid picture in our minds and that leaves behind a

lesson. (Note: the accompanying picture is one my son Timothy drew

after reading this account and represents what he saw in his minds

eye.)

Paul London from Sudan used the following illustration while speaking

at a missions conference.

Where I minister in Africa the strongest man of the tribe is the

chief. You might think this is because the chief must wear a very

large headdress and heavy ceremonial robes, but there are other

reasons, as you shall soon see.

Water is very scarce where these people live, so they have to dig deep

wells. These are not wells as we know them with brick walls, a pulley,

and a bucket at the end of a rope. The African people sink a narrow

well shaft as much as 100 feet into the ground. Even though the well

is deep, the ground water of that dry land seeps very slowly

into it and there is never a drop to waste. If the water were too easy

to reach, the people might not use it sparingly, or an enemy might

steal the next day's supply at night. So, the tribesmen cut

alternating slits into the wall of the well all the way down to the

water. By alternating his weight from one leg to the other, a man can

use these slits as steps to walk down the shaft to the water. Only the

largest, strongest men can make the arduous climb down the well and

back up again with a full water skin for the whole tribe.

One day a man carrying water out of the shaft fell and broke his leg.

He lay at the bottom of the well. No one dared to help because no one

had the strength to make the climb carrying another man. The chief was

summoned. When he saw the plight of the injured man, he doffed his

massive headdress and discarded his ceremonial robe. Then the chief

climbed down into the well, took the weight of the injured man on

himself, and brought the man to safety. The chief did what no one else

could do.

This is just what Jesus did for us. He came down to rescue us by

taking the weight of our sin on himself. He put aside his heavenly

honors, just as the chief put aside his headdress and robe, in order

to save us. But let me ask you a question, friends. When that chief

took off his headdress and robe, did he stop being the chief? No, of

course not. In the same way, when Jesus "made himself nothing" and put

aside his heavenly glory, he never ceased being God.

HOW You Can Use Illustrations Effectively ?

1) Never start an illustration with the words: "Now let me

illustrate", instead simply shift to a different time, situation and

place: "Two weeks ago while I was at home reading the newspaper..."

2) Dont abstract the experience: "Some time ago I read in some

newspaper that...", instead be concrete: "Two weeks ago I read in the

Seattle Times editorial section that..." People need detail to share

effectively in the experience.

3) Focus on aspects that best illustrate the point you are teaching

and be careful about bringing in extraneous information that could

distract your listeners mind. For example: "Last week I had an

opportunity to share Christ with my neighbor who is an avid

fisherman." If the rest of the story has nothing to do with his

fishing, you are better off leaving out this aspect of your human

interest story, because you can very easily send some of your

listeners off day dreaming about their fishing experiences and they

will completely miss the boat when it comes to your lesson.

4) Remember, every effective lesson will only have a few major points

that you as the teacher are driving home. If your lesson rambles

through a lot of items, your listeners may follow them at the time but

wont retain them. Learning is accomplished through repetition. Build

on each point. Think of your points as the mountain peaks to which you

are guiding your students. Illustrations in your talk are like

watersheds bringing the points down to the rivers of everyday life.

5) Build your lesson around your scripture passage or topic, NOT

around your illustrations. Illustrations and analogies dont "prove

doctrinal points", they just help communicate them. A sound lesson

springs from prayerful study of the Word of God. The points in the

content of your lesson should come out of your passage.

6) Dont fall into "Here is a great illustration trap". Last week you

ran into a great human interest story that will make a vivid

illustration. Your tempted to put it in your lesson for Sunday school

class. Ask yourself, does it really support the points being taught?

If not save it in your "illustration file box."

http://www.anewsong.org/articles/useillus.htm

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Preachers - Mark Twain - I always have to stand when that fellow lectures!

Twain was a standee

One day during a lecture tour, Mark Twain entered a local barber shop for a shave. This, Twain told the barber, was his first visit to the town.

Youve chosen a good time to come, he declared.

Oh? Twain replied.

Mark Twain is going to lecture here tonight. Youll want to go, I suppose?

I guess so

Have you bought your ticket yet?

No, not yet.

Well, its sold out, so youll have to stand.

Just my luck, said Twain with a sigh. I always have to stand when that fellow lectures!

http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/1101454‑witty‑and‑funny‑stories

July 9, 2013

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Preaching - Attitude Towards

Date Originally Filed - 10/1991.101

Henry Ward Beecher asked Park Benjamin, the poet and humorist, why he

never came to hear him preach. Benjamin replied, "Why, Beecher, the

fact is, I have conscientious scruples against going to places of

amusement on Sunday."

Preaching - Bad

Date Originally Filed - 6/1991.101

Child to preacher: "That was some sermon! It made my dad slump way

down."

‑ Unknown

‑ PULPIT HELPS, Sept., 1990

Preaching - Bad

Date Originally Filed - 6/1991.101

A minister visited a rural family for supper and they ate before

church.

He explained that he couldn't eat very much if he wanted to preach a

good message.

After supper the wife asked the husband to go on to the service with

the minister while she washed the dishes and then worked in the

nursery.

When the husband returned, she asked him how the preaching was.

"Oh, to tell you the truth he may have as well et," said her

husband.

‑ Unknown

‑ PULPIT HELPS, Sept., 1990

Preaching - Effective

Date Originally Filed - 6/1991.101

The early evangelist George Whitefield, was one of America's most

effective preachers who won thousands to Christ. He was vigorously

opposed by Charles Chauncy, pastor of Boston's famous First Church.

Rev. Chauncy objected to the idea of instantaneous conversions and

to the emotional excitement caused by Whitefield's ministry.

On Whitefield's second visit to Boston, in 1774, the two met.

Chauncy said, "So you have returned, have you?"

"Yes," replied the evangelist, "in the service of the Lord."

"I'm sorry to hear it," Chauncy said bluntly.

"So is the devil," retorted Whitefield.

The devil hates any preacher who fearless and effectively sounds the

gospel trumpet.

‑ PULPIT HELPS, July, 1991

Lack Of Righteousness

- 6/1991.101

Quote

"When there is no thirst for righteousness, the sermons seem dry."

‑ Unknown

‑ PULPIT HELPS, Sept., 1990

Preaching - Too Long

Date Originally Filed - 10/1991.101

Claude Swanson, late governor of Virginia, made a particularly long

and rambling speech at a banquet one evening. An old lady came up to

him afterward to shake his hand. "How did you like the speech?" asked

Swanson. "I liked it fine," she replied, "but it seems to me you

missed several excellent opportunities." Swanson looked puzzled.

"Several opportunities for what?" he asked. "To quit." she snapped.

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Humor - Preaching - 5/1992.101

Joke

A popular preacher got sick on a Sunday morning, and he called a

retired minister and asked if he would preach the service for him.

The substitute agreed but felt inadequate in filling in for such a

good preacher. When he entered the pulpit, he struggled for a

metaphor that would express his humility in his task.

"I feel inadequate in taking the place of your minister this

morning. He is such a good preacher and brings light just like the

sunlight through a clean pane of glass. I, on the other hand, am like

the piece of cardboard that you have seen substituted for the pane in

a window."

He went on and preached a pretty good sermon. At the door

afterwards, a good sister of the church gushed, "Preacher, you're no

cardboard; you a real pane."

‑ Loyal Jones

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, p. 48.

Preaching - Quote - 5/1992.101

"Illustrations, like windows, let light into the mind."

‑ C. H. Spurgeon, \_Flashes of Thought\_ (London: Passmore &

Alabaster, 1874), p. 218.

Humor - Bad and Sorry - 5/1992.101

I was preaching in this church, and this boy would have something

negative to say eery Sunday, no matter what I preached on. One Sunday

he said, "That's about the sorriest sermon I ever heard."

The next Sunday he came by and said, "Do you call that a sermon?"

The third Sunday he said, "That is about the nearest nothing sermon

I think I ever heard."

I got so upset that I went to the deacons and said, "Gentlemen,

every Sunday this man has some negative comment to make about my

preaching."

One of them replied, "Oh don't pay any attention to hi,. He's just

a half‑wit. All he can say is what he repeats from other people."

‑ Rev. George Goldtrap, Madison, TN

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, pp. 53‑4.

Humor - Preaching -- 5/1992.101

"The city preacher worked hard on his sermon most of the week and

retyped it on Saturday night. But during the night his dog chewed it

all up. He didn't notice until it was time to go to church. When he

got in the pulpit, he said, "I had a nice sermon prepared for you this

morning, but my dog chewed it up. I'm going to have to rely on the

inspiration of the Lord today, but I promise to do better next

Sunday."

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, p. 16.

Humor - Preaching - 5/1992.101

A man got up in the middle of the pastor's sermon and walked out.

After church, his embarrassed wife sought to explain to the preacher.

"I hope you don't think he disagreed with what you said. He just

has a tendency to walk in his sleep."

‑ Dr. Charles S. Webster

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, p. 30.

Humor - Long and Dull

Originally Filed - 5/1992.101

A preacher, known for long and boring sermons, had been into a

particularly tedious one for nearly an hour, when he stopped to scold

his congregation.

"I know you think my sermons are long, but I've got something

important to impart to you. Now, I don't mind you looking at your

watches while I'm preaching, but I want you to know that I resent you

shaking them to see if they're still running."

‑ Loyal Jones

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, p. 50.

Preaching Long and Dull

Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.101

A little boy noticed a plaque in the back of the church and asked

the preacher what it was.

"Oh, those are the church members who died in the service," he

explained.

"Which," the boy asked, "the morning or the evening one?"

‑ Dr. Michael Nichols, Lexington, KY

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones, pp. 63‑4.

Humor - Preaching Pulpit Committees

Date Originally Filed - 5/1992.101

A young preacher was invited into a church to preach a trial

sermon, with the understanding that he might be hired as pastor. He

liked the looks of the church, and he like the people. Everything was

fine at the beginning of the service, with hymns and the prayer. As

the young preacher mounted the pulpit, however, and old man came in,

followed by a huge Redbone hound. He sat down on the front row, and

his dog plopped down beside him. The young preacher thought this was

unusual, but he read his text and launched his sermon, at which point

the hound let out a huge yawn with a yip at the end. This interrupted

the preacher, but he began again. The dog began to scratch a flea,

his leg whacking the floor with each lick, and the preacher stopped

again and asked if someone would take the dog outside. Neither the old

man not anyone else moved, so the preacher started in again. The dog

let out a growl and a deep bark, disturbed at something he heard

outside. Again the preacher stopped and again asked if someone would

take the dog outside. When on one responded he got down from the

pulpit, took the dog by the collar, led him outside, and closed the

door behind him. Returning to the pulpit, he preached a pretty good

sermon.

After the service he asked the deacon who was the head of the

pulpit committee how he had done.

"Well," the deacon said, "You preached a right good sermon. I

believe you're all right there, but you really shouldn't have taken

Old Man Johnson's dog out. I know the dog disturbed you, but you

know, Mr. Johnson is a faithful member of this church, and he's on our

pulpit committee. He always brings his dog to church. He loves that

dog, and we're used to it, and it don't bother us to have him here. I

think you ought to apologize to Mr. Johnson for throwing his dog out

like that. I believe you better do that."

So the young preacher approached the old man outside and said, "I

sorry I put your dog out. The deacon here told me how much you think

of your dog and how you always bring him to church. I'm real sorry

that I did that, and I hope you'll accept my apology."

"Oh, that's alright," the old man said. "I wouldn't have wanted my

dog to hear that sermon anyhow."

‑ Dr. Lee Morris

‑ \_The Preacher Joke Book\_, edited by Loyal Jones,

pp. 28‑29.

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Preaching

Date Originally Filed - 2/1992.101

Quote

"He who practices what he preaches may have to put in some

overtime."

‑ Unknown

‑ Pulpit Helps, Dec. 1991, p. 12.

Preaching

Date Originally Filed - 2/1992.101

Story

There was an letter once printed in a British weekly which read as

follows:

Dear Sir,

It seems ministers feel their sermons are very important

and spend a great deal of time preparing them. I have been

attending a church quite regularly for the past 30 years,

and I have probably heard 3,000. To my consternation, I

discovered that I cannot remember a single one. I wonder if

a minister's time might be more profitably spent on

something else?

Sincerely....

For weeks a real storm of editorial responses ensued. The uproar

finally was ended by this letter:

Dear Sir:

I have been married for 30 years. During that time I have

eaten 32,580 meals ‑‑ mostly of my wife's cooking.

Suddenly, I have discovered that I cannot remember the menu

of a single meal. And yet, I have received nourishment form

every single one of them. I have the distinct impression

that without them, I would have starved to death long ago."

Sincerely....

‑ \_Pulpit Helps\_, August, 1990, p. 14.

Preaching - Boredom - 2/1992.101

Quote

"Any subject can be made interesting, and therefore any subject can

be made boring."

‑ Hilaire Belloc

‑ \_Instant Quotation Dictionary\_, p. 44.

Preaching - Boredom

Date Originally Filed - 2/1992.101

Quote

"A guy who wraps up a two‑minute idea in a two‑hour vocabulary."

‑ Walter Winchell

‑ \_Instant Quotation Dictionary\_, p. 44.

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Preaching - John Stott the Preacher's Portrait P85

Date Originally Filed - 3/1992.101

"I have always liked the definition of preaching given by Professor

Chad Walsh, 'The true function of a preacher is to disturb the

comfortable and comfort the disturbed.'"

John Stott THE PREACHER'S PORTRAIT p85

Humor - Preaching

Date Originally Filed - 3/1992.101

I heard about a man who was walking a pit bull down the road. The

dog got away and walked up to a preacher and bit him on the knee.

Then the dog went across the street and bit a beautiful young woman.

The owner was brought before a judge who asked, "Why did your dog

bite the preacher?" The man answered, "I don't know! He's never done

anything like that before." Then the judge asked, "Well why did he

bite the young woman?" The owner replied, "Oh that's easy to answer!

He wanted to get the taste of that preacher out of his mouth!"

‑ Mike Minnix

Preaching - Bad - Worth saying?

Date Originally Filed - 3/1992.101

A preacher in India began his sermon on - 1

Corinthians 13 - 1 Corinthians 13} as follows: "The beatific

familiarity of this chapter traditionally appointed for Quinquagesima

must never cause us to neglect its profundity."

His interpreter translated this for the benefit of the Indian

congregation as follows: "The speaker has not said anything worth

remembering so far. When he does I will let you know."

1500 ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PREACHING & TEACHING Backhouse

compiler p308‑9

Preaching - Hitting the Bullseye

Date Originally Filed - 3/1992.101

(This Jewish tale contains some excellent advice on the art of

storytelling.)

There was once a rabbi who answered every question by telling

a story. One day a student asked his teacher. "Rabbi, you have a

wonderful ability to select just the right story for each question.

What is your secret?"

Smiling impishly, the old teacher replied, That a reminds me

of a story. Once a young soldier was traveling through the country

when he stopped to rest his horse in a small village. As he walked

around the small houses he spotted a wood fence. On the wood fence

were nearly forty small chalk circles and right in the center of each

was a bullet hole.

"What amazing accuracy," the soldier thought as he examined

the fence. "There is not a single shot that has not hit the

bullseye."

The soldier quickly et out to find the one who possessed such

great skill. He was told that the sharpshooter was a small boy.

"Who taught you to shoot so well?" the soldier asked.

"I taught myself," the young lad replied.

Not yet satisfied the soldier pressed the young boy. "To what

do you contribute your great skill."

"Actually," the young lad began, "it is not very difficult.

First I shoot at the wall, and then I take a piece of chalk and draw

circles around the holes."

The rabbi chuckled for a moment. "Now you know my secret. I

don't look for a story to answer a question. I collect every story or

parable I hear and then store it in my mind. When the right occasion

or question arises, I point the story in its direction. In effect, I

simply draw a circle around a hole that is already there."

as told in STORIES FOR THE JOURNEY by William R White

Humor - Preaching - 3/1992.101

There were these two boys that were growing up. One was a

Wesleyan and one was a Catholic. They were good friends and they

always talked about the church that they went to. And so one day, the

Wesleyan decided that he would go to church with the Catholic and the

Catholic decided that he would go to church with the Wesleyan. So the

Wesleyan boy went to church with the Catholic boy one Sunday. And

while they were sitting there in the service, the Catholic explained

to this Wesleyan boy everything that they did. He explained why the

prayed the way that they did, when they stood up, when they sat down,

what they said. He explained everything and he told him all of these

things and what they meant. And so they left church and the next

Sunday, they went to the Wesleyan Church. And the little Catholic

didn't understand. He thought, "man these Wesleyans are weird

people". And so, the Wesleyan began to explain why we pray like we

pray, why we sit like we sit, why we stand like we stand, why we take

the offering like we do and all of these things. And at this

particular Wesleyan church, they had a pastor who had a habit of

preaching a long time. And one of the things that the pastor would

always do. He would always take his watch off and he would lay it

right there like that. Because everyone always got on him about how

long he preached. And so, here's this little Catholic boy sitting in

the service and he saw the preacher take off his watch and set it

right there, and so the boy asked, "What does that mean?" And so the

Wesleyan boy responded: "It doesn't mean a thing."

Dan Tilley

NewLife Wesleyan Church

Waldorf, Maryland

(06/04/91)

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Humor - Preaching Bad

Date Originally Filed - 6/1991.101

A minister visited a rural family for supper and they ate before

church.

He explained that he couldn't eat very much if he wanted to preach a

good message.

After supper the wife asked the husband to go on to the service with

the minister while she washed the dishes and then worked in the

nursery.

When the husband returned, she asked him how the preaching was.

"Oh, to tell you the truth he may have as well et," said her

husband.

‑ Unknown

‑ PULPIT HELPS, Sept., 1990

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Humor - Preaching - Funny - Small Comfort

A senile old man greeted a guest preacher at the door after the

service, and said, "It was a good talk, Son, but you talked too

long." He paused, then he added, "And you talked too fast." Again he

was quiet for a moment, then he said, "You didn't say anything

either."

At this point, one of the members felt it his duty to intervene.

"Don't worry, Reverend," he said, "that poor old fellow isn't all

there. He only repeats what everybody else says."

Preaching Cuts on His Face...

One Sunday morning, the congregation noticed that Rev. Gordon's face

was full of cuts. His sermon had also been far longer than it usually

was, and their patience had been sorely tried.

After the service, one of the deacons went to him, and said, "My dear

brother, whatever did you do to your FACE?"

"Well," said the minister, "this morning I was so worried about my

sermon that I cut myself while I was shaving."

The deacon replied: "May I suggest, my brother, that in future you

worry about your FACE ‑ and cut your SERMON!"

Humor - Hit Me Again!

A minister was delivering a tedious and lengthy address at a local

charity. He was running long over time. The master of ceremonies tried

to signal to him to stop, but without success.

Finally, in desperation, he picked up the gavel, aimed and threw, but

missed the minister and hit a man in the front row. The man slumped

down, and as he slipped into unconsciousness, he was heard to say,

"Hit me again! I can still hear him preaching!"

Humor - a Button in His Mouth

A certain minister's sermons were always just twenty minutes in

length. One Sunday, however, he went on for an hour and twenty

minutes.

When someone asked him why his sermon had run so long overtime, he

explained: "I always put a Lifesaver in my mouth ‑ and when it melts,

I know the twenty minutes are up. But this Sunday, I reached in my

pocket, and put a BUTTON in my mouth by mistake!"

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Humor - a Young Preacher's Ordeal

A YOUNG PREACHER'S ORDEAL

A young man stood up to preach his first sermon. He was so frightened

that he could hardly speak, but he had written a good, long sermon, so

he just kept plodding on through it.

"Speak up!" a man yelled from the back of the church. "We can't HEAR

you back here!"

The young man tried to preach louder, but in a little while the man

called out again, "We can't HEAR you!"

The young man tried a little harder, but he became more frightened by

the minute. Finally, the man at the back stood up and shouted: "We

can't hear a thing you're SAYING!"

Another churchgoer in the front pew stood up, turned around, and said,

"What are you COMPLAINING about? Just sit down and thank God, or I'll

change PLACES with you!"

/mMinister (New)

/sFunny

/i

Date Originally Filed -

/tTHE REPUTED BISHOP

/fS

A young man had just finished journalism school, and got a job on the

staff of a local newspaper. His first assignment was to cover the

ordination of a new minister in town.

The bishop, who was present for the occasion, felt that he should warn

the young man against the half‑truths and sensationalism of his

profession. "Young man," said the bishop, "never write anything unless

you are absolutely sure of it. And make a point of using the words,

'alleged', 'reputed', 'claimed', or 'it is said'."

The young reporter repeated these instructions to himself as he

covered the ordination service.

The next day, the following report appeared in the newspaper: "The

Reverend Hiles, who is alleged to have graduated at seminary, was

ordained yesterday by the reputed Bishop of Durban, who claimed to

have been ordained in the same church. Some exceptional eats were

provided by Mrs. Hiles, who is said to be the minister's wife."

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Humor - Presidential Candidate Dukakis

When presidential candidate Dukakis made one of his whistle stops during the 1988

campaign, a group of listeners stood in the back and help up their

plaques and chanted, "Bor‑ing," Bor‑ing," "Bor‑ing," "Boring."

Sometimes a congregation might be thinking the same thing, especially

when a manuscript sermon is read.

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Preaching - Effective, not Offensive - The Cause of His Interest

A clergyman in Boston had a plain country pastor visit him, and

invited him to address his people. The preacher was so familiar in his

speech and illustrations that the city pastor was disturbed lest his

cultivated city congregation should take offense. A few days later

there came a prominent member of that congregation to his pastor, in

earnest desire for Christ; and when asked as to the cause of his

interest, he referred to the homely words of that country preacher,

who had spoken right to his heart as he had not been spoken to from

that pulpit before. When the pastor told this story he said: "I'll

never again distrust God's Spirit in guiding His preachers. I had

written more than one sermon for the express purpose of reaching that

man; but he was reached by one sentence from a plain man whom God's

Spirit guided."

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Preaching 9/1997.101 Bill Crumley's life was filled with heartbreak.

Bill Crumley's life was filled with heartbreak. Oh yes, in

college, he played on a national championship baseball team. Then

came a good job, marriage, and two adopted children. But later the

business failed. Then the marriage failed. Bill lost all. Another

company went bankrupt, and Bill lost that job, too. Sad years passed;

then he married a wonderful woman who also had known heartbreak.

At 55, Bill felt God's call to preach, but his church would not

ordain a divorced man. Totally surrendered to God, Bill gave up

everything that seemed to be for self, even melting down his gold,

college championship ring for seminary funds. He eventually finished

his seminary training through a correspondence course. Then he

preached in nursing homes, little churches, and went to the

Philippines with an evangelistic group.

The Crumleys minister to small, country churches. This preacher

with the heartbreak past is powerfully ministering to others with

heartaches. Bill says he preaches the gospel, not for his glory but

because he must. It is a task God has laid on him.

Open Windows

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Preaching - A Young Boy, Who Did Not Care Much for Preaching, 9/1997.101

A young boy, who did not care much for preaching, came to church

one night to hear an evangelist. The boy sat down next to a deacon,

who was delighted to see him. Halfway through the message the young

man got up to go. The deacon whispered, "Where are you going. He's

not done yet."

The young boy replied, "I need to get a haircut."

"Why didn't you get one before you came?" the deacon asked.

"Because I didn't need one before I came," answered the boy.

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Preaching - Dr. Donald Campbell, president of Dallas Theological Seminary 9/1997.101

Many people do not know what expository preaching is. Dr. Donald

Campbell, president of Dallas Theological Seminary, recalled some

early advice he received while a youth minister in a small Texas

town. His pastor said to his young apprentice, "Son, there are two

types of sermons: topical and suppository!"

Preaching

- 9/1997.101

Once my sweet little wife suggested that when I prepare my sermon

to remember the advertisement of a new washing machine: "After it

spins dry, it shuts itself off automatically."

‑ Tal D. Bonham & Jack Gulledge, \italic{The Treasury of Clean Senior

Adult Jokes }(Nashville: Broadman Press, 1989) 32

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He Is Still Moving Lives

Robert Murray McCheyne and his church were visited by a young

pastor. The pastor was taken around by the custodian to see the

church where McCheyne had preached. The custodian took him into a

little room and there was a little stool. The old custodian said,

"Sir, You see that stool?" The young man thought, well that's

strange, to show me a little stool. The old custodian said, "That's

the stool where Pastor McCheyne would kneel and weep before he'd ever

preach." Then he took him into the pulpit and the pastor saw this

great Bible in the pulpit. He saw that it was all watered and stained

and he said, "Well, what is all this on the Bible? The custodian

said, "Well, that's the tears that Brother McCheyne would shed while

he preached." He is dead but he is still moving lives.

Preaching - He Was Both!

Vance Havner said that he heard about a guy who was going to be

original or nothing, and he was both!

Preaching - Anointed - The Making Of An Evangelistic Preacher

During the great, Welsh revival, it is said a minister was

marvelously successful in his preaching. He had but one sermon, but

under it hundreds of men were saved. Far away from where he lived, in

a lonely valley, news of this wonderful success reached a brother

preacher. Forthwith, he became anxious to find out the secret of this

success. He started out and walked the long and weary road, and at

length reaching the humble cottage where the good minister lived he

said: "Brother where did you get that sermon?" He was taken into a

poorly furnished room and pointed to a spot where the carpet was worn

shabby and bare, near a window that looked out towards the solemn

mountains, and the minister said:

"Brother, that is where I got that sermon. My heart was heavy for

men. One evening I knelt there and cried for power to preach as I had

never preached before. The hours passed, until midnight struck, and

the stars looked down on a sleeping valley and the silent hills; but

the answer came not, so I prayed on until at length I saw a faint grey

shoot up in the east; presently, it became silver and I watched and

prayed until the silver became purple and gold, and on all the

mountain crests blazed the altar fires of the new day; and then the

sermon came, and the power came, and I lay down and slept, and arose

and preached, and scores fell down before the fire of God; that is

where I got that sermon." ‑‑G. Campbell Morgan

Preaching - When To Stop Boring

Beneath a glass atop a pulpit which Dr. Walter Wilson approached to

bring a message occurred these wise words of wisdom, "If after ten

minutes you don't strike oil, QUIT BORING!" ‑‑W. B. Knight

Preaching - Why Their Sermons Were Anointed - John Livingston

John Livingston, of Scotland, once spent a whole night with a

company of his brethren in prayer for God's blessing, all of them

together besieging the throne; and the next day under his sermon five

hundred souls were converted. All the world has heard how the audience

of Jonathan Edwards was moved by his sermon on "Sinners in the Hands

of an Angry God," some of them even grasping hold of the pillars of

the sanctuary from feeling that their feet were actually sliding into

the pit. But the secret of that sermon's power is known to but very

few. Some Christians in that vicinity had become alarmed, lest, while

God was blessing other places, He should in anger pass them by; and so

they met on the evening preceding the preaching of that sermon, and

spent the whole of the night in agonizing prayer. ‑‑H. C. Fish

Preaching - Earnestness - Preaching As One Dying To Those Dying

It is said of a famous preacher that he always preached "as a

dying man to dying men." It is such preaching that is always

effective. A minister visiting a penitentiary one Saturday, was

invited by the Christian warden to speak to the inmates the next day.

That evening the minister felt impressed to go to the penitentiary and

learn the details regarding the service. Noting two chairs draped in

black in the main assembly room he inquired as to the reason. Said the

warden, "These two chairs are draped for death. Your sermon will be

the last these men will ever hear." There are chairs in most

audiences draped for death. The only difference being, that in most

instances they are not seen. Nonetheless, every preacher would do well

to remember that he is a dying man addressing men who are appointed to

die.‑‑The Toronto Globe

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Preaching - The Preaching Lincoln Liked - fighting bumble bees

Abraham Lincoln put it rather strongly but effectively nevertheless,

when he said: "I do not care for cut and dried sermons. When I hear a

man preach I like to see him act as if he were fighting bumble bees!

‑‑Selected

Preaching - Obedience In The Pulpit

A French preacher was appointed the king's chaplain. Shortly after

the chaplain's appointment, the king was taken by death. His son

succeeded him. After a chapel service, some men of the court came to

the chaplain. "Your preaching is offensive to the new king," they

said. "If you do not change, you may be replaced." He is my king when

I am in my home," the chaplain replied. "When I stand in the pulpit,

Jesus Christ, my King of kings, is the only one to whom I must be

obedient."

Preaching - Reproof In Preaching

One thing I have against the clergy, both of the country and in the

town; I think they are not severe enough on their congregations. They

do not sufficiently lay upon the souls and consciences of their

hearers their moral obligations, and probe their hearts and bring up

their whole lives and actions to the bar of conscience. The class of

sermons which I think are most needed are of the class which offended

Lord Melbourne long ago. Lord Melbourne was seen one day coming from a

church in the country in a mighty fume. Finding a friend, he

exclaimed: "Its too bad! I have always been a supporter of the Church,

and I have always upheld the clergy. But it is really too bad to have

to listen to a sermon like that we have had this morning. Why, the

preacher actually insisted upon applying religion to a man's private

life!" But this is the kind of preaching which I like best, the kind

of preaching which men need most; but it is also the kind of which

they get the least. ‑‑W. E Gladstone

Preaching-Faithfulness In-The Preaching Daniel Webster Chose To Hear

Every Sabbath morning and evening in a small New England church,

there was seen among the few worshipers a man whose great head and

cavernous eyes were in keeping with his great distinction. Someone who

knew him in Washington asked him how it was that, there in the

village, he was so regular in going to the small church and listening

to the ungilted minister, whereas in Washington he paid little

attention to great churches and distinguished preachers. The man with

the great head and the wonderful eyes answered: In Washington they

preach to Daniel Webster, the statesman and the orator. Here in this

village, this man preaches to Daniel Webster, the sinner." ‑‑McCartney

Preaching - Opening And Closing - Don't Make Your Introduction Too Long!

A preacher can make his sermon introduction too long, and thereby

lose his listener's attention before he even begins preaching the body

of his message.

Washington Irving told the humorous tale of a Dutchman who, having

to leap over a ditch, went back three miles that he might have a good

run at it. He found himself so completely winded when he arrived at

the edge of the ditch again, that he was obliged to sit down on the

wrong side to recover his breath! ‑‑adapted from Horace Smith

Preaching - Opening And Closing - Oysters Do Better Than Some Preachers

I heard one say the other day that a certain preacher had no more

gifts for the ministry than an oyster, and in my own judgment this was

a slander on the oyster, for that worthy bivalve shows great

discretion in his openings, and knows when to close. If some men were

sentenced to hear their own sermons It would be a just judgment upon

them, and they would soon cry out with Cain "My punishment is greater

than I can bear." ‑‑Spurgeon

Preaching - Pointedly And Clearly - Clarity Is Needed

An exchange has the following story: A minister preached on

- 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 1 Corinthians 13:1}. The reporter for

the daily paper, strangely enough, got it right, but the linotype

operator, in setting the word "charity," made the mistake of using an

"L" instead of an "H," and the proofreader overlooked it. So the

minister was reported in the morning paper as having preached from the

following text: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,

and have not clarity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling

cymbal." Commenting on the story the editor says: "As it appears in

print it was not New Testament truth, but it was truth, nevertheless.

The people want the preacher to be luminous rather than voluminous,

and the preacher who is without clarity will soon be without a

congregation." ‑‑Moody Monthly

Preaching - Make Your Point Pointedly And Clearly

Winston Churchill advised, "If you have an important point to make,

don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit it once.

Then come back and hit again."

Preaching - Preaching That Aims At Everything Hits Nothing

Charlie Shedd tells a parable about a duck hunter who hunted all

day and bagged nothing despite the fact that ducks were everywhere.

His companions, seeking to discover the cause of his problem, followed

him to the blinds the next day. Their analysis of the difficulty was

succinctly stated: "His trouble was that he was shooting ducks in

general and not in particular."

Shotgun sermons can have a similar lack of effectiveness. He who

makes no point in preaching, also makes no sense. Aimless, pointless

preaching often confuses more than it convicts. In order to bear the

truth home effectively, a sermon should have a clear focus on one or

more precise points of truth. ‑‑Duane V. Maxey

Preaching To Bring Them In

A sailor had just returned from a whaling voyage, and he was taken

by a friend to hear an eloquent preacher. After the sermon he said:

"Jack wasn't that a fine sermon? "Yes, it was shipshape," said Jack,

"the masts just high enough, the sails and rigging all right, but I

did not see any harpoons. When a vessel goes on a whaling voyage, the

great thing is to get whales, but they do not come because you have a

fine ship; you must go after them and harpoon them. The preacher must

be the whaler. ‑‑W. H. Griffith

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Preaching - Unfit For Dogs

A dirty, bedraggled cocker spaniel showed up frequently at the

services of our West Virginia camp meeting. Washed and brushed it

would have been handsome. The friendly mutt especially liked the

prayer meetings, and it would sit quietly near the altar as people

prayed. It seemed to enjoy Morris Wilson's preaching, too. I was a bit

put out when it trotted in one morning, saw that I was the preacher

for that service, and immediately departed. It reminded me of an old

story.

A new pastor booted a hound out of the church. While preaching, the

pastor noted a man wearing an angry scowl and thought, Oh, oh, that's

the dog's master, and I've made an enemy. As the sermon progressed,

the man's face brightened, so the pastor mustered courage to approach

him with an apology after the benediction. "That's OK" the man said.

"I was angry at first, but I decided I didn't want my dog to hear that

kind of preaching anyhow."

Preaching - Where The Fox Could Hide

There was a worldly parson in Philadelphia‑‑a great fox hunter whom

a Spruce Street Quaker took in hand. "Friend, said the Quaker, I

understand thee's clever at fox‑catching. "I have few equals and no

superiors at that sport," the parson complacently replied.

"Nevertheless, friend," said the Quaker, "if I were a fox I would hide

where thee would never find me. "Where would you hide?" asked the

parson, with a frown. "Friend," said the Quaker, "I would hide in thy

study." ‑‑Moody Monthly

Preaching - Testing The Acoustics Resulted In A Conversion

Spurgeon went one day into Albert Hall, where he was to preach on

the coming Sabbath. In order to test the acoustics of the hall with

his voice, he mounted the platform and repeated the text, "The blood

of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." ( - 1 John

1:7 - 1 John 1:7}) Not long afterward, he received word that the

repetition of that text had borne rich fruit. A painter at work in

some part of the great hall was startled when he heard the voice of

Spurgeon repeating, in the empty hall, that great sentence of John's.

The words so impressed him that he was converted and brought to

Christ. ‑‑McCartney

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Preaching - The Conversion Of An Unseen Listener

Stephen Grellet, the noted Friend, once felt a burden on his heart

and the leading of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to men in an

American lumber camp. But when he arrived at the camp he found it

deserted, for the men had gone farther into the forest. Feeling,

nevertheless that he had been sent there by the Holy Spirit, he stood

up in the empty mess hall and delivered his sermon, heard, as he

thought, only by the board walls of the building and the lofty trees

of the forest.

Years afterward, crossing London Bridge in the evening gloom, he

was somewhat rudely stopped by a man who accosted him and said, "You

are the man I have been looking for all these years. I have found you

at last!" "There must be some mistake," said Grellet, "I have never

seen thee." "No," said the man, "but did you not preach at a lumber

camp in the American forest?" "Yes, but there was no one there." I was

there," responded the man, "and I heard the sermon."

Then he went on to relate how he had come back from where the men

were working to get a saw that had been left behind, when he was

startled and alarmed at hearing the sound of a man's voice.

Approaching the building, he looked through a chink of the logs and

saw Grellet standing by himself preaching the sermon. He listened to

the preacher, was convicted of sin, got hold of a copy of the

Scriptures, learned the way of life, was saved, and brought others

with him into the Kingdom of Heaven. ‑‑McCartney

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Preaching - The Impact Of Wesley's Preaching

Mr. Madan, who had been educated for the bar and being a great

mimic, was desired one evening by some wicked companions to go and

hear John Wesley. After hearing Wesley, Madan was to return and mimic

Wesley's mannerisms and message for their entertainment.

Accordingly, he went to the meeting with this intention; when, just

as he entered the place, Wesley named as his text: "Prepare to meet

thy God;" with a solemnity of accent that struck Madan very forcibly,

inspiring a seriousness which continued to increase as Wesley

proceeded in exhorting his hearers to repentance. On returning from

the meeting, Madan was accosted by his acquaintances, "Have you taken

off the old Methodist?" (Were you able to pick up his mannerisms so as

to mimic them?) "No, gentlemen," he replied, "but he has taken me

off!" ‑‑Dictionary Of Illustrations

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Preaching - The Reply To Wesley's Observation

It is related of John Wesley that on one occasion he was riding

along a high road when he saw a man kneeling by the roadside breaking

stones. "Ah," said the preacher, I wish I could break the hearts of

some who hear me preach as easily as you are breaking those stones."

The man looked up and replied, "Did you ever try to break them on your

knees?"

Preaching - Where Do Sermons Go?

When a local preacher died, his relatives found he had neatly tied

up the messages he had delivered and placed a card on top of them with

this inscription: "Where has the influence gone of all these sermons I

have preached?" Underneath he had scribbled in large letters, "OVER."

On the other side this answer was found: "Where are last year's

sunrays? They have gone into fruits and grain and vegetables to feed

mankind. Where are last year's raindrops? Forgotten by most people,

of course, but they did their refreshing work, and their influence

still abides. So, too, my sermons have gone into lives and made them

nobler, more Christlike, and better fitted for Heaven." His comments

apply to the efforts of all who faithfully give out the Word.

Preaching - Brevity In Preaching Is Sometimes Wise

Very wisely does an American writer say: "There is a mighty

difference between preaching the everlasting Gospel and preaching the

Gospel everlastingly." There is no end to the truth, but there should

be an end to the sermon, or else it will answer no end but that of

wearying the hearer. A friend who occasionally visits the Continent

always prefers the passage from Dover to Calais, for a reason which we

commend to the notice of certain prosy speakers‑‑it is short. If you

speak well, you will not be long; if you speak ill, you ought not to

be so. We commend to the verbose brother the counsel of a costermomger

to an open‑air preacher‑‑it was rather rude, but peculiarly

sensible‑‑"I say, old fellow, cut it short." ‑‑Spurgeon

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Preaching - Enters Glory "Hitting On All Cylinders"

The Rev. James Harris, 77, of Oreana, Illinois, collapsed and died

at the end of his sermon in a county home for the aged. With his last

breath, he said, "I have just one more point to make and then I'll

close!" We believe he made that "last point" in the presence of his

wondrous Lord! ‑‑W. B. Knight

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Preaching - Good Preaching, Not Like An Endless Rope

Don't preach too long. I should say, if you are earnest and

interesting that whatever you are preaching about, you should preach

about forty minutes. Some sermons remind me of the sailor who was told

to pull a rope on board; he pulled and pulled until he was tired and

then declared that he believed the "end of this 'ere rope is cut off."

‑‑Spurgeon

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Preaching Too Long

Many churches wisely have a large clock behind the congregation

where it is quite obvious to the preacher. Some don't. The one where

Rev. Sam has been invited to speak did not. As time when on, Brother

Sam finally commented that he had forgotten his watch and asked, "Does

anyone have the time?" "There's a calendar right behind you," piped a

voice.

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Preaching With Simplicity And Tact - Using Words Easy To Be Understood

An Englishman crossed the Channel to France and was exceedingly

disturbed by the fact that he could not understand a word of the

French language. He was met at the depot by a Frenchman, and the

driver of the cab talked to him in French. When he got to the hotel,

he found nothing but the French language there and a man, with French

language, took him to his couch at night. He was almost exhausted

because of his incapacity to understand anything that was being said

to him, and in sad mind he went to sleep. In the morning, he woke up

and he heard a rooster crow and he said, "There's some English, at

last."

And what a relief it is, after hearing some men talk in learned

technicalities, foreign to our capacity, to suddenly hear something

the plainest people can understand! I know only of one use for words,

and that is to let men know what you mean. ‑‑Spurgeon

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Preaching - Why One Succeeded And The Other Didn't

Two clergymen were settled in their youth in contiguous parishes.

The congregation of the one had become very much broken and scattered,

while that of the other remained large and strong. At a ministerial

gathering Dr. A said to Dr. B.‑‑"Brother, how has it happened that I

have labored diligently as you have, and preached better sermons and

more of them, my parish has been scattered to them winds, and yours

remains strong and unbroken?" Dr. B facetiously replied, "Oh, I'll

tell you, brother. When you go fishing, you first get a great, rough

pole for a handle, to which you attach a large, cod line and a great

hook, and twice as much bait as the fish can swallow. With these

accouterments you dash up to the brook and throw in your hook, with

'There, Bite, You dogs!' Thus you scare away all the fish. When I go

fishing, l get a little switching pole, a small line, and just such a

hook and bait as the fish can swallow. Then I creep up to the brook

and silently slip them in, and I twitch 'em out and twitch'em out till

my basket is full." ‑‑Preacher's Lantern

Preaching - High Wind, Big Thunder, No Rain!

The story is told about an old American Indian who attended a

church service one Sunday morning. The preacher's message lacked real

spiritual food, so he did a lot of shouting and pulpit pounding to

cover up his lack of preparation. In fact, as it is sometimes said,

he "preached up quite a storm." After the service, someone asked the

Indian, who was a Christian, what he thought of the minister's

message. Thinking for a moment, he summed up his opinion in six

words: "High wind. Big thunder. No rain." Yes, when the Scriptures

are neglected, there is "no rain." Only when preaching is based on

God's Word are His people blessed and refreshed.

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Preachers

I am not a obstetrician bringing babies to birth, but a

pediatrician whose job it is to give believers the milk of the Word

and then to try to give them a porterhouse steak now and then.

‑ J. Vernon McGee, \italic{Thru the Bible Radio

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Preaching - World War II Wayne Oates 0 2/1997.101

During World War II Wayne Oates was driving from Louisville,

Kentucky to North Carolina. He and his wife, Pauline were eager to go

home from Southern Seminary, where he was a student, to see her

parents. They saved their gasoline stamps ‑ which were necessary to

buy gasoline during the war ‑ and finally got enough to make the trip.

Just before they got to the mountains, a car pulled alongside them,

and the driver waved them over. Wayne pulled over and stopped behind

the man. They noticed there were two little boys in the back seat of

his car.

When Wayne approached, the man said: "As you can se, I'm drunk.

I'm too drunk to drive this car over this dangerous two‑lane mountain

road. I see there are two of you, would one of you please drive me

and my boys over the mountains?" Wayne and Pauline agreed and Wayne

did so.

They hadn't been driving long when the man said: "What's your

work?"

"I'm a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in

Louisville," Wayne said.

"I want to tell you something," the man said. "Please don't take

this personally ‑ because I know you aren't a phony. You wouldn't be

driving my car if you were. I mean, there's nothing at all in this

for you. But, I want to tell you something important: Preaching is a

racket! If you get on through seminary and spend your life in

ministry, you just remember that ole Dave told you: 'Preaching is a

racket.'"

‑ \italic{Fellowship News, }May/June 1994

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Preachers - 1/1997.101

Someone has said that there are only two kinds of speakers: those

who have something to say, and those who have to say something!

Preachers

- 5/1997.101

A young preacher, looking up from his reading, asked his wife, "How

many really great preachers do you think there are?" She replied,

"Well, I don't know, but there is probably one less than you think."

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

One of the things I want to call for is a new emphasis on the

spiritual vitality of the preacher. Preaching is more than a craft or

an art or a profession. It is more than the shaping of some words

designed to dazzle the ears of hearers. Preaching grows out of the

minister's own experience with the living God. As preachers, we stand

inside the faith. We are not objective. We bear witness to what has

changed our lives.

‑ Charles B. Bugg, Professor of Preaching at The Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

A fine preacher was once complimented by a little boy who said,

"You're not a great preacher because I could understand every word you

said."

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

A man wrote home that he had been to the big city to hear two great

preachers, one in the morning and one at night. He said that in the

morning he heard Dr. B., and at night Dr. S. "I was impressed by

both. Dr. B. is a great preacher, but Dr. S. has a wonderful

Savior."

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

An older minister said to a new preacher who asked for advice,

"Tell them what you know. Don't tell them what you don't know for

that will take too long."

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

Two Welsh preachers were on their way to a meeting. One noticed

that the other had a written outline of his sermon. He remonstrated,

"You can't carry fire on paper."

"True," replied his companion, "but you can use paper to start a

fire."

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

A preacher is not so much a builder of sermons as he is a builder

of people; to build people into what God wants them to be, he must

love them. It is not enough to love to preach; we must love those to

whom we preach. Without love, preaching is just noise.

‑ Roger Campbell

See - 1 Cor. 13:1 - 1 Corinthians 13:1

Preaching

- 1/1997.101

"I preached as never to preach again, as a dying man to dying men."

‑ Robert Murray McCheyne

Preaching

- 1/1997.101

Helena Modjeska (1844‑1909) was one of the most popular actresses

of her time because of her emotional style and superbability. Once,

to demonstrate the raw power of her ability, she gave a dramatic

reading in her native tongue, Polish. No one at the sedate dinner

party understood Polish, but all were in tears by the end of her

performance. Such was the power of her presentation. Only later was

it revealed that the piece that had moved the sophisticated audience

to tears was the Polish alphabet.

Preaching

- 1/1997.101

Upon accepting his first church, a young pastor asked an elderly

board member if he had any wise advice. The elderly man responded,

"Son, a sermon is like a good meal; you should end it just before we

have had enough."

Preaching

- 1/1997.101

Preaching has been described this way: "A mild‑mannered man

standing up before mild‑mannered people and exhorting them to be more

mild‑mannered."

The true function of preaching is to disturb the comfortable and to

comfort the disturbed.

Preaching

- 5/1997.101

A father gave a report on his son's performance in a school play.

He said, "He did not have many lines, but he spoke them at the right

time, and he spoke them well."

Preaching

5/1997.101

The story is told of a patient in a mental ward who attended chapel

services with the other patients in the ward. The chaplain who spoke

was so confusing that one of the patients going out was heard to say,

"There, but for the grace of God go I."

- 7/1997.101

A little four‑year‑old girl noticed that her daddy always bowed his

head just before time for him to step into the pulpit. One day she

asked, "Daddy, why do you always bow your head just before you get up

to preach?"

Her preacher father answered, "Honey, I bow my head and ask God to

help me to preach a good sermon."

With all the innocence of childhood, the little girl said, "Daddy,

why doesn't God answer your prayer?"

‑ Raymond Clubb, \italic{Proclaim, }July, August, September, 1995,

"Story Writing for Sermons" p. 44

Preaching

- 7/1997.101

Nearly a century ago, John Milton Gregory proposed what he called

the first law of teaching: "The teacher must know that which he would

teach." That law must govern the preacher's message as the first law

of thermal dynamics governs the physical universe. We cannot declare

with authority what we do not know from God's Word. The congregation

deserves to know that "Thus saith the Lord" lies behind their pastor's

message. We can declare God's truth with even greater authourity when

we have experienced its truth ourselves.

‑ Bill O'Conner, \italic{Proclaim, }July, August, September, 1995

"Preaching from a Firm Foundation" 40

Preaching Style Don't Let Your Underwear Show

In A sermon, Greek and Hebrew are like underwear: they add a lot

of support, but you don't you don't want to let them show.

‑ Michael Green

Preaching

- 7/1997.101

I never see my pastor's eyes Though they with light may shine; For

when he prays he closes his, And when he preaches, mine.

J. D. Grey, \italic{Epitaphs for Eager Preachers }(Nashville: Broadman

Press, 1972), 122.

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Preaching - Expository Preaching by Ray C. Stedman

- 11/2001.101

THE WORD OF POWER

The greatest contribution the Church can make today to a troubled and

frightened generation is to return to a consistent and relevant

preaching of the Word of God! All Christians would agree that what is

most needed in the present age is a loosing of the power of God among

us, but what is often forgotten is that the proclamation of His word

has always been God's chosen channel of power. "He sent his word and

healed them," the psalmist declares. And it is not so much preaching

from the Bible that is needed, as it is preaching the Bible

itself‑‑‑in a word, expository preaching!

WHAT IS EXPOSITION?

Exposition is preaching that derives its content from the Scripture

directly, seeking to discover its divinely intended meaning, to

observe its effect upon those who first received it, and to apply it

to those who seek its guidance in the present. It consists of deep

insight into and understanding of the thoughts of God, powerfully

presented in direct personal application to contemporary needs and

problems. It is definitely not a dreary, rambling, shallow verse‑by

verse commentary, as many imagine. Nor is it a dry‑as‑dust

presentation of academic biblical truth, but a vigorous, captivating

analysis of reality, flowing from the mind of Christ by means of the

Spirit and the preacher into the daily lives and circumstances of

twentieth century people.

I first came to understand and value expository preaching from the

writings of G. Campbell Morgan, the Prince of English expositors in

the early decades of the 20th century. I ran across his books while

trying to teach an evening Bible study class of sailors at Pearl

Harbor during World War II. I learned from him not only how to

discover the patterns of thought‑development in a biblical passage,

but how to organize those patterns into contemporary presentations

that would touch directly upon the issues of life today. In 40 years

of preaching and teaching I have never been able to match Morgan's

beauty of language and richness of literary allusions, but I have had

him continually before me as a model to follow.

Other expository preachers have added touches of their own uniqueness

to my learning process. Dr. Harry Ironside of the Moody Church of

Chicago left his mark upon me through a summer spent with him as his

chauffeur, secretary, and constant companion. From him I learned

simplicity of style and warmth of illustration. Campbell Morgan's

successor at Westminster Chapel, D. Martyn Lloyd‑Jones, also greatly

raised my appreciation of the Bible's relevancy and authority. I was

privileged also to know with some degree of intimacy such expositors

as J. Vernon McGee, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Richard Halverson, Stephen

Olford, John R. W. Stott, Frances Schaeffer, and J. I. Packer. These

all have, in one degree or another, taught me lessons of preaching

power.

PREPARING TO PREACH

Upon coming to Palo Alto in 1950 I began immediately to preach through

books of the Bible, working my way through Sunday after Sunday until I

had finished the whole book. I have tried to keep an even balance

between the New Testament and the Old, usually alternating from one to

the other. This has great advantages over textual preaching in that it

forces one to handle the difficult themes of Scripture as well as the

more popular ones. Further it keeps truth in balance since it follows

the pattern of Scripture itself in mingling several themes in one

passage; and thus makes possible the apostolic goal of "declaring the

whole counsel of God." If a series grows so long it tends to weary the

congregation, I do not hesitate to break it off in favor of another,

but will come back later and finish the original series. Since for

years now all our messages have been put into print, when a series is

finally finished it is a complete coverage of the biblical book and is

available as a unit for private or group study.

My method of sermon preparation has evolved from this concept. Having

chosen which book of the Bible I will preach through, taking into

consideration the needs of the congregation, the level of doctrinal

instruction they may yet lack, and the spirit of the times we may be

passing through, I then begin to read the book through several times

in various versions. My objective is to create a general outline of

the book as a guidline to my preaching. I note the broad divisions of

the book, and the major changes of subjects. What I want is a

bird's‑eye view of the whole. For instance, my division of the gospel

of John is very simple: Prologue, - 1:1‑18 - John 1:1‑18} ‑

The Manifestation of the Messiah, - 1:19‑4:54 - John

1:19‑4:54} ‑ Growing Unbelief, - 5:1‑12:50 - John 5‑12} ‑ The

Unveiling of the Church, - 13:1‑17:26 - John 13‑17} ‑ The

Murder of the Messiah, - 18:1‑19:42 - John 18‑19} ‑ The New

Creation, - 20:1‑21:25 - John 20‑21}.

I then choose a section from the first division upon which to base my

first message. The section should be short enough to be manageable in

the time available (30‑40 minutes) but yet constitute a single main

theme. I next check out all lexical or linguistical problems that may

be present, and read the historical background for customs or color

that needs explaining or emphasizing. Then I begin work on a detailed

exegetical outline of the passage. Outlining permits me to put textual

truth into my own words, and yet reveals clearly the logical

development of the author's thought. This outline is the backbone of

my message. It may take several hours of work to produce, but it is

essential in order to maintain clarity and faithfulness to the text.

WHERE COMMENTARIES COME IN

After I have completed this outline, then (and only then) do I read

commentaries or other messages on the passage. This reading

constitutes a check upon my own exegesis and permits me to make

changes or add insights (with due acknowledgment) to my own work. At

this point I have probably put 8 to 10 hours of work into my text, but

have only reached the half‑way point of preparation. The exegesis is

now complete. I know what I am going to say, but I do not yet know how

I am going to say it.

I turn then to the work of presentation. Here I begin to form what I

call my preaching notes. They are based upon the exegetical outline I

have made, but I must now select what to include and what to leave

out. Here also I add in the illustrations which will make the text

stick in people's minds and hold their attention until the end is

reached. I think through how best to introduce the passage, usually

with a personal story or reference to some current event. I must

choose which themes to enlarge upon and which only to touch upon and

then pass on. My notes will reflect all this and lead me logically and

climactically to my predetermined conclusion. I will take these notes

to the platform with me, but I try to know them so thoroughly that I

need only the briefest glimpse from time to time to keep me on track.

I believe it is very important to maintain eye contact with my

audience while I am preaching.

THE PREACHING EXPERIENCE

I try to have my preparation complete by Friday afternoon, or at the

latest, Saturday morning. I need to let my notes alone for at least

half a day before preaching, while I prepare my body and heart with

rest and prayer and other work. Following this approach, through the

years I have gained a growing sense of the grandeur of preaching. I

have seen many examples of its power to transform both individual

lives and whole communities. I have increasingly felt a divine

compulsion to preach, so that I know something of Paul's words, "Woe

is me if I preach not the gospel!" But even more‑‑‑I feel a deeply

humbling conviction that I could never be given a greater honor than

the privilege of declaring "the unsearchable riches of Christ." I

often hear in my inner ear the words of the great apostle: "This is

how one should regard us; as servants of Christ and stewards of the

mysteries of God!" A servant of Christ! A steward of the mysteries! I

can think of no greater work than that.

The Ray Stedman Library Index

From the archives of Elaine Stedman, July 30, 1996.

http://www.pbc.orgDate Originally Filed - p/stedman/misc/expos.html

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Preaching Prophetically See A. W. Tozar, Of God and Man, pp 20‑25.

- 5/2002.101

See A. W. Tozar, \italic{Of God and Man, }pp 20‑25.

Not just echoing the Word, but seeing and speaking as God sees and

speaks.

What is God saying right now.?

Also, see the Charisma article: (Prophecy)

"Beyond Prophesying: Traits of a Prophetic Church" By Mike Bickle

1. Revealing the Heart of God

2. The Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy

3. The Prophetic Standard in the Scriptures

4. Moving When the Cloud Moves

5. Demonstrating the Power of God

6. Prophetic Dreams and Visions

7. Crying Out Against Social Injustice

8. Crying Out for Personal Holiness and Repentance

MIKE BICKLE is the senior pastor of Metro Vineyard Fellowship in

Kansas City, Mo., and the author of a new book, Growing in the

Prophetic (Creation House).

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Urgency in Preaching

The Necessity for Urgency in Preaching

Preaching - Urgency - 7/2002.101

The biblical theme of the Lords imminent return will do much to

inject urgency in a gospel service

By Thomas H. Lindberg

There is a constant need for pastors to examine the important areas of

biblical truthin the realms of both faith and practice. One area a

preacher should continually be improving is that of preaching.

The world today is a gigantic playground in which people are fighting

over expensive toys. The need of the hour is priority and direction.

The man of the hour is the preacher with the inerrant Word of God in

his or her hand. Preachers today dare not be little children at a time

when God is looking for mature men and women to stand tall and help

build His Church. Pastors today speak clearly, confidently, and

convincingly to announce, "This is the way; walk in it"

( - Isaiah 30:21 - Isaiah 30:21}).\*

In the Book of Acts, Luke made it evident that the leaders of the

Early Church were preachers. But how did the apostles preach? What

characteristics marked their preaching?

The 21st‑century preacher should not slavishly imitate the precise

methodology of the apostles, for the Spirit ever leads the church down

fresh paths. However, a preacher may learn from the basic elements

found in apostolic preaching. Lets examine one trait in New Testament

preachingthe apostles preached with urgency.

URGENCY IN THE BIBLE

Websters defines urgent as "calling for or demanding immediate

attention; conveying of a sense of urgency." That is precisely how

leaders in Acts declared their message.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter called for immediate action. After the

Holy Spirit had been outpoured, Peter stood and preached the gospel.

The crowd listened attentively and then asked how they should respond

to God ( - Acts 2:37 - Acts 2:37}). Peter did not suggest they

delay their decision. He did not encourage the people to think about

his message overnight. The hour was urgent. Peter exclaimed to the

people, "Repent and be baptized" ( - Acts 2:38 - Acts 2:38}).

- Acts 3 - Acts 3} is another example of preaching marked by

urgency. A lame man had been miraculously healed, and Peter seized the

opportunity to preach the gospel. He did not discuss various

theological theories. The issue of salvation was far too urgent. Peter

cried, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped

out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" ( - Acts

3:19 - Acts 3:19}).

Urgency is also clearly evident in Pauls preaching. On one occasion,

when addressing the need for salvation, he made the matter most

urgent: "I tell you, now is the time of Gods favor, now is the day of

salvation" ( - 2 Corinthians 6:2 - 2 Corinthians 6:2}, emphasis

added). Perhaps Pauls theology and methodology on the issue of

urgency in preaching is summed up in his statement, "We are therefore

Christs ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.

We implore you on Christs behalf: Be reconciled to God" ( - 2

Corinthians 5:20 - 2 Corinthians 5:20}).

A case may be built for preaching with urgency by examining two

passages from Pauls letters. The first is - 2 Corinthians

5:11 - 2 Corinthians 5:11}. The broader context shows that Paul was

writing about the future ( - 5:1 - 2 Corinthians 5:1}). Then he

made a sobering statement when he wrote, "For we must all appear

before the judgment seat of Christ" ( - 5:10 - 2 Corinthians

5:10}). Finally, Paul concluded, "Since, then, we know what it is to

fear the Lord, we try to persuade men" ( - 5:11 - 2 Corinthians

5:11}).

Some have argued that this fear of the Lord applies only to Christians

who will stand before God. One author wrote, "This fear is the fear of

regret that a Christians life will be revealed as one wasted and

spent in selfishness rather than in devotion to Christ." That writer

is correct in his statement, but he did not press far enough in his

application of the text. This verse reaches past the boundaries of the

converted community and touches all people. Those without faith in

Christ will one day face the eternal terror of the Lord. Preachers

must never forget that fact: they must be urgent in their preaching.

A second passage that presents a case for urgency in preaching is

- 2 Timothy 4 - 2 Timothy 4}. In - verse 2 - 2 Timothy

4:2}, Paul urged Timothy, "Preach the Word." The next verse

demonstrates that Paul desired Timothy to preach with urgency. He

wrote, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound

doctrine" ( - 4:3 - 2 Timothy 4:3}). People will not always be

open to the message of Jesus, therefore we must preach with urgency

whenever we have the opportunity.

The world today is in a darkened mess. You have only to read the

papers or listen to the news to verify this fact. J.I. Packer wrote

with sharp insight about our world today: "For at no time since the

Reformation have Christians as a body been so unsure, tentative, and

confused as to what they should believe and do. The outside observer

sees us as staggering from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like

a drunk in the fog. Preaching is hazy, heads are muddled, and hearts

fret.

The Pentecostal Preacher is one who should preach a biblical message

and deliver it with urgency.

"Why is this? We blame the external pressures of our world, but this

is like Eve blaming the serpent. The real trouble is that for two

generations or more our churches have suffered from a famine of

hearing the Word of the Lord."

Packer mentioned the word "famine." When a famine occurs, urgent

action must be taken. The Pentecostal preacher is one who should

preach a biblical message and deliver it with urgency.

Moses preached with urgency. He said, "This dayI have set before you

life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life"

( - Deuteronomy 30:19 - Deuteronomy 30:19}).

Elijah is another example of a preacher who declared Gods Word

urgently. - First Kings 18 - 1 Kings 18} records the

confrontation on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

When Gods man spoke he cried, "How long will you waver between two

opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him" ( - verse 21 - 1

Kings 18:21}). The prophet allowed no middle ground. He spoke to the

people with urgent words.

Again and again the preachers and prophets of the Bible spoke with

urgency. You only need to read the sermons of Joshua

( - Joshua 24:14 - Joshua 24:14}24), Samuel ( - 1

Samuel 15:12 - 1 Samuel 15:12}33), and Jonah ( - Jonah

3:1 - Jonah 3:1}4) to see nothing less than urgency will do when

speaking for God to men about eternal issues.

The student of preaching will quickly discover that urgency in

preaching was not limited to Bible days. Many preachers through the

centuries had a pressing appeal in their voices and messages.

URGENCY IN CHURCH HISTORY

John Chrysostom of Antioch (347407) was one of the Eastern Church

Fathers. He became known as "John the golden‑mouthed" because of his

anointed preaching. One historian wrote of Chrysostom: "As he advanced

from exposition to illustration, from Scripture to practical appeals,

his delivery became gradually more rapid, his countenance more

animated, his voice more vivid and intense. The people would hold

their breath. They felt as if drawn forward toward the pulpit by a

sort of magnetic influence. Some who were sitting rose from their

seats. By the time the discourse came to an end, the great mass of

that spellbound audience could only hold their heads and weep with

tears."

George Whitefield (171470) moved thousands of people in both England

and America with his preaching. He preached to all levels of society.

Whitefield often wept during his urgent appeal. When asked why, the

evangelist responded, "You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it

when you will not weep for yourselves. Your immortal souls are upon

the verge of destruction, and, for ought you know, you are hearing

your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have

Christ offered to you." To Whitefield, preaching was a matter of

pressing importance and required urgency by the preacher in the

delivery of his message.

URGENCY TODAY

The entire gospel service should contain a sense of urgency. The

meeting ought to inform both the visitor and longstanding church

member that Jesus is Lord and is worthy to be worshiped. The opening

words of the sermon should tell the congregation that the message they

are about to hear is of great importance. Then, as the preacher

launches into the message, he or she must deliver the sermon with

feeling so as to capture the listeners attention and move each person

toward an encounter with Christ.

Urgency may be produced by the preachers voice. You should guard

against two extremes. One is the artificial whine that pitches high

and borders on sobbing. The other is a monotonous drone that lulls

people to sleep. Either is a mistake to be avoided. Preachers should

use their normal voices, speaking clearly with authority, variety, and

a ring of excitement.

The choice of words a preacher uses can help to stir urgency. Strong,

action verbs communicate more effectively than lazy verbs. For

example, "he bolted out the door" is superior to "he ran out the

door."

Additionally, the good preacher who wishes to instill urgency into the

service must guard against predictability. As soon as people know your

next move, the outcome of your next illustration, the common patterns

of words you employ, and the regular themes you preach, their interest

and your urgency diminish. The rule of thumb is this: As your

predictability in the service rises, your urgency falls.

The biblical theme of the Lords imminent return will do much to

inject urgency in a gospel service. Its worth noting that many of the

sermons in the Book of Acts end with Jesus return and the judgment

that follows.

The preacher today faces many temptations. One temptation is to lose

urgency in preaching. As ministers, we must guard against this at all

costs.

John Stott issued a warning and a challenge to all preachers of the

gospel when he wrote, "A preacher can be faithful to Scripture, lucid

in explanation, felicitous in language, and contemporary in

application, yet somehow appear cold and aloof. No note of urgency is

ever heard in his voice, and no suspicion of a tear is ever seen in

his eyes. He would never dream of leaning over the pulpit to beg

sinners in the name of Christ to repent, come to Him, and be

reconciled with God."

To preachers who model their preaching after the preaching of the New

Testament, they must gain and maintain the use of urgency in their

messages. This is the preaching that must take place in our churches

today if we are going to be effective in proclaiming the gospel.

Thomas H. Lindberg, D.Min., is senior pastor of First Assembly of

God, Memphis, Tennessee.

\*Scripture references are from the New International Version.

http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/200202/200202\_082\_urg

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7 Deadly Power Point Ideas - Multimedia Design and Presentation Sins

Preaching - Power Point Ideas - 10/2002.101

Avoiding Seven Deadly Multimedia Design and Presentation Sins

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Have you ever attended a lecture or conference presentation where the

presenter projected text material that was unreadable to all but the

people in the first few rows? Have you ever seen a World Wide Web page

where the color combinations made your eyes cross? As I attend various

professional conferences or browse through web pages, I pay attention

to not only what is being presented but also how it is presented. In

this way, I get ideas to improve my own presentations; I also see many

presentation sins. Frankly, I have been guilty of every sin mentioned

in this article, and I am occasionally tempted to backslide into some

of them. Nevertheless, the first step in changing behavior is to

recognize the problem. Some of these design and presentation sins can

be committed with an overhead projector as well as with any

computer‑based multimedia, so ask yourself if you have committed any

of them. Because the ideas in this article can be applied to a variety

of presentation media, the term "presentation" will be used

generically, referring to overhead transparencies and computer

presentations alike, whether the media are intended for individual

viewing, such as a web page, or for large groups using a video

projection system or large screen monitor.

Seven Common Presentation Sins and Their Ab‑Solutions

Sin 1. Letter fonts are too ornate, or there are too many different

fonts, styles, and font colors in a single presentation.

Ab‑Solutions: Avoid the temptation to use fancy fonts and instead

choose one that is easy to read. Just because your computer has 100

fonts and can show millions of colors does not mean that you should

try to use them all in one presentation. Limit a presentation to one

or two letter fonts, styles, and/or font colors and then be consistent

in how you use them, such as to show captions, headings, subheadings,

and so on. If you feel compelled to use an ornate font, use it only

with a few words and be careful to use it appropriately. For example,

do not use all capital letters with a font such as Old English, which

requires mixed upper and lower case letters for legibility.

Sin 2. Font sizes and/or graphics are too small.

Ab‑Solutions: Sometimes the default font sizes in presentation

software are too small for people in a large room to read, so do not

rely on defaults. Plan your screens or transparencies so that people

in the back row can easily read the smallest lines of text and clearly

see all of the graphics.

Sin 3. The background is too "busy" and/or the background and text

color combinations do not have enough contrast for legibility.

Ab‑Solutions: Make sure that any designs and colors in the background

do not conflict with the text, and that the background and text

adequately contrast each other, such as a dark background with light

text or vice versa. Avoid the color red for text. Red text can be

difficult to read, and many people are color blind to red.

Sin 4. Crowding too much information onto a single screen or

transparency.

Ab‑Solutions: Keep screens simple and clear. Do not crowd text, but

allow plenty of line spacing and generous margins. Use short phrases

and key words, or break large blocks of text into several screens. In

a face‑to‑face presentation, you will appear to be in command of your

subject if you give more information as you speak than appears on the

screen. Using key words will also help you to avoid reading the screen

to your audience. For a large group presentation, whether you are

using overhead transparencies or a computer presentation, follow the

six‑by‑six rule of thumb: Generally, no more than six lines of text

per screen and no more than six words per line. Pretend that you are

having to pay six dollars for every word you use. The temptation to

reduce the font size is usually a signal that you are trying to put

too much on one screen.

Sin 5. Leaving a screen unchanged for too long, or not leaving a

screen up long enough for the audience to take notes.

Ab‑Solutions: Create suspense and interest by using the Layer or Build

feature in presentation software, or overlays on a transparency, to

progressively reveal information. If you will not refer to information

on the screen for a while, insert a blank background into your

presentation sequence, or turn the overhead projector off, so the

audience will focus attention on you. With presentation software, you

can use the handout feature to provide screen information to the

audience so they will not need to copy it.

Sin 6. Overusing special effects.

Ab‑Solutions: With presentation software, be consistent in the use of

special effects, such as text flying in, dissolving, and so on. Do not

use too many different effects because the audience may become more

interested in what the next special effect will be than in your

message.

Sin 7. Presentation is all text, no pictures.

Ab‑Solutions: Don't forget that computer presentations and

transparencies are visual media. Too much text can be boring. Use

pictures, charts, graphs, and cartoons to illustrate ideas and to add

interest.

Certainly there are more than just seven sins that can be committed

while designing and presenting instructional multimedia. The preceding

sins are committed when the equipment is working. Another sin might be

the over dependence on computer technology. We have probably all

attended, and perhaps delivered, presentations plagued by technical

difficulties.

First, if you must use a computer and video projector or LCD plate for

your presentation, you should know how to set up the equipment

yourself, and, if possible, test it on location before you do the

presentation. Take a Run‑Time or Player version of the presentation

software with you for an off‑campus presentation so that you are not

dependent on event organizers for supplying you with the correct

version of your software. New software versions will usually play

presentations created with older versions, but not vice versa.

Second, you should have a backup plan in case of complete equipment or

software failure. If this happens, do not spend more than five minutes

of your presentation time trying to make the equipment work. Apologize

to the audience ONCE, but then take care to avoid the statement "If

the equipment were working, we could show you . . . " The audience is

already keenly aware of that fact, so it is better to just go on with

a discussion of your ideas and do your best to describe what they

would have seen. If you want to be better prepared for such disasters,

you should provide handouts from the software that show in miniature

what is on the screen, or if you must have an on‑screen presentation,

such as for a very large audience, prepare overhead transparencies or

35mm slides and have a projector handy as a backup for your

presentation. Be sure to test the backup equipment to make sure it is

working, too!

In summary, as you design and prepare your presentation media, whether

you will use overhead transparencies, 35mm slides, presentation

software, or the web, keep in mind your audience and the situation in

which they will view the presentation. Carefully consider your layout

and your use of letter fonts, styles, sizes, colors, backgrounds, and

images. Clarity should be your priority; then go ahead and make it

pretty.

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Director, Center for Faculty Excellence

http://www.indiana.edu/~simms/MDPD/cunningham.html

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How To Preach Without Results - Charles G. Finney

- 11/2002.101

How To Preach Without Results

by

Charles G. Finney

Edited and paraphrased by

Keith and Melody Green

Let your supreme motive be to increase your own popularity ‑ then, of

course, your preaching will be suited for that purpose, and not to

convert souls to Christ.

Avoid preaching doctrines that are offensive to the carnal mind, lest

they should say to you, as they did of Christ, "This is a hard saying,

who can hear it?" ( - John 6:60 - John 6:60})

Make no distinct points, and do not disturb the consciences of your

hearers, lest they become alarmed about their souls.

Avoid all illustrations, repetitions, and emphatic sentences that may

compel your people to remember what you say.

Avoid all heat and earnestness in your delivery, lest you make the

impression that you really believe what you say.

Address the emotions, and not the conscience, of your hearers.

Be careful not to testify from your own personal experience of the

power of the Gospel, lest you should produce the conviction upon your

hearers that you have something which they need.

Do not awaken uncomfortable memories by reminding your hearers of

their past sins.

Denounce sin in general, but make no reference to the specific sins of

your present audience.

Do not make the impression that God commands your listeners here and

now to obey the truth. Do not let them think that you expect them to

commit themselves right on the spot to give their hearts to God.

Leave the impression that they are expected to go away in their sins,

and to consider the matter at their convenience.

Dwell much upon their inability to obey, and leave the impression that

they must wait for God to change their natures. Preach salvation by

grace, but ignore the condemned and lost condition of the sinner, lest

he should understand what you mean by grace, and feel his need of it.

Preach the Gospel as a remedy, but conceal or ignore the fatal disease

of the sinner.

Do not speak of the spirituality of God's holy law (by which comes the

knowledge of sin ‑ - Romans 3:20 - Romans 3:20}), lest the

sinner should see his lost condition and flee from the wrath to come.

Make no appeals to the fears of sinners, but leave the impression that

they have no reason to fear.

Preach Christ as an infinitely amiable and good‑natured being, but

ignore those scathing rebukes of sinners and hypocrites which so often

made His hearers tremble.

Encourage lots of church socials, and attend them yourself.

Make it your great aim to be personally popular with all classes of

your hearers.

Aim to make your hearers pleased with themselves and pleased with you,

and be careful especially not to wound the feelings of anyone.

Especially avoid preaching to those who are present. Preach about

sinners, but not to them. Say "they," and not "you," lest anyone

should take your subject personally, and apply it to their own life,

securing the salvation of their soul.

\webpage{http://www.believersweb.org/view.cfm?id=402&rc=1&list=multi

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\webpage{http://www.lastdaysministries.org/articles/howtopreachwithoutresults.html

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7 Laws of the Learner by Bruce Wilkinson

- 3/2003.101

Learner

Expectation

Application

Retention

Need

Equipping

Revival

\webpage{http://www.joshhunt.com/7LAWS.html

\webpage{http://www.christianity.com/CC\_Content\_Page/0,,PTID310806%7CCH

ID585666%7CCIID,00.html

\webpage{http://www.bible.org.za/LifeChange%20Resources/Video/7Learner.

htm

Also ‑ \webpage{http://www.multilanguage.com/video/7laws.htm

7 Laws of the Learner ‑ Bible Study Lessons.pdf

www.joshhunt.com/7LAWS.html

The 7 Laws of the Learner

by Bruce Wilkinson

Founder and President of Walk Thru the Bible Ministry

Chapter One: The Law of the Learner

Home Page Articles Email Resume Conferences

Introduction:

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The Seven Laws of the Learner has impacted my ability to teach and preach more than any other book. I believe it is the best book on teaching ever written. I strongly encourage you to purchase this book and study it carefully. If I were a pastor I would go through the video series every year with my teachers until I felt we had all saturated the material. The chapter below is provided to whet your appetite to read the whole thing. I was thrilled to receive permission to provide this for you.

You can purchase The Seven Laws of the Learner book and DVD video curriculum online at www.walkthruthebible.christianbook.com/. You can reach Walk Thru the Bible at 1 (800) 361‑ 6131.

Enjoy some great reading!

‑Josh Hunt

Text of Chapter One

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

The first time I heard him teach, I said to myself, "I want to study under that man!" His name was Howard G. Hendricks, and I entered seminary to learn everything I could from this master teacher. I wanted to learn not only what he taught by also how he taught.

During those four years of graduate study, I listened to him for more than 350 hours and always left his class instructed, challenged, and a step closer to God. But the time I was a senior I began to wonder if "Prof" even understood the word boring.

After studying how he taught for four years, I discovered he followed a basic style. About three minutes before class began, his right foot began to bounce underneath the old oak desk. At the precise moment the second hand swept past twelve he raised his right forefinger into the air, announced "Ladies and gentlemen. . . " and delivered an opening one‑liner that was so stimulating all of us couldn't help but copy it down. After three to four minutes he told his first joke. Eight to ten minutes into class he would inevitably rise from his desk and draw a graph or chart on the white board. Always the blue pen first. Then the purple. And always with the unique squiggly underline for emphasis. His rhythm was unmistakable. And it worked‑‑just ask any of the thousands who have studied under him.

During my last year of seminary, I decided to give Dr. Hendricks a test. I wanted to see what this master teacher would do if one of his students would not‑‑no matter what‑‑pay attention in his class. I sat in the back right‑hand corner of the room, next to the only window, and decided to gaze out the window the entire class session. Since there were only thirty students in the class, he was sure to notice. I took off my watch and started timing. What would he do if he couldn't get my attention.

As expected, he started off with a bang and delivered his typical one‑liner. Although my hand began to tremble, I forced myself not to record the line. From the corner of my eye I could see that he noticed immediately I wasn't paying attention. He broke tradition and in the first minute told a joke‑‑totally out of context. If I laughed he would immediately know I was listening, so I discreetly put my hand over my mouth and continued staring out that window.

As the two‑minute mark passed, he got up from his chair and started drawing on the board‑‑much too early. He again noticed I wasn't taking notes, stopped right in the middle of his chart and didn't even finish it.

He put the pen down and walked to the corner of the room in order to look down the aisle at me‑‑desperately trying to make eye contact. Sweat beaded on my brow, but the seconds continued ticking by. I wasn't going to pay attention.

Finally, he broke. This master teacher almost leaped down the aisle and yelled, "Wilkinson, what on earth are you looking at outside that window?!"

With a sheepish glaze, I turned around and said, "Nothing, Prof. Sorry." I looked down at my watch to determine his grade. Only three minutes and thirty‑seven seconds had passed! Incredible. His tolerance for one student not paying attention was limited to 217 seconds.

With that remarkable experience freshly imprinted on my mind, I walked down the hall into the next class with a different professor. Talk about a contrast. One side of the room was filled by students who never paid attention but did their homework for another class. This teacher, however, didn't seem bothered; he just turned and lectured to the students sitting on the other side. His mindset was, It's not my problem if you don't want to learn.

What a contrast of teacher mindset‑‑and what a contrast of student learning. One teacher could tolerate for only a few seconds one student not learning what he was teaching, and the other didn't seem to care for the whole semester!

How would you have fared on that quiz with one of your students looking out the window? Would you have cared? Would the clock still be ticking?

Dr. Hendricks believed that as the teacher, hew was the one responsible for my learning. By contrast, the second teacher thought he was responsible only to cover the material, regardless of whether anyone learned.

Learner Mindset

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

What an extraordinary example for the heart of the Law of the Learner. Dr. Hendricks believed that as the teacher he was the one responsible for my learning. He felt responsible, and if I wasn't learning, he did whatever it took‑‑changed his lesson plan, his style, told an irrelevant joke, even ran down the aisle and confronted me.

In contrast, the second teacher's mindset was limited to his responsibility to cover the material whether anyone was learning it or not.

The foundational attitude lies at the very heard of The 7 Laws of the Learner. In a sense, all of the laws are like a row of dominoes; this first one ultimately controls all the dominoes that follow.

Every master teacher I know shares this mindset and senses it is his responsibility to cause the student to learn.

But do you know what the prevailing mindset is in the preaching and teaching community today? A tragic divorce has occurred‑‑teachers have separated themselves from their students and redefined teaching as what the teacher says rather than what the student learns.

Teachers have redefined teaching as "the coherent speaking of an adult located at the head of the class to a passive gathering of students." They believe their primary responsibility is to cover the material in an organized manner.

They think about teaching as what they do‑‑their focus is upon themselves. Many teachers cover their material and leave the room thinking they have taught. But if you gave their students a pop quiz, you would find out they hardly learned a thing. The divorce between teaching and learning is tragic and the root of many of our educational woes.

Dr. Hendricks modeled a revolutionary mindset. He saw teaching as not what he did but what his students did. His focus was not upon himself but upon his students. Since that student looking out the window was not learning, Dr. Hendricks realized he was therefore unable to teach. That's why he stopped delivering his content and ran down the aisle!

Can you sense what difference it would make in your life and the lives of your students if you joined Dr. Hendricks?

In addition, what does God have to say about this issue of teaching? Could it be that we have abandoned God's perspective and directive given to teachers?

We've been asking people wherever we travel how they would define the responsibilities of a teacher. Over and over again they say, "to teach the facts" or "to cover the material" or "to complete the lesson plan." The focus of all these definitions is upon anything but the student's learning.

Somehow we think teaching is talking. If I come to the class and go though my notes and get you to laugh a couple of times, and you copy down my notes and may ask one or two questions, then I have taught you. No, that is not teaching. True biblical teaching doesn't take place unless the students have learned. If they haven't learned, I haven't taught.

What does the Bible mean by "teach" and what does it mean by "learn"? Does God divorce teaching and learning? Let's look at a couple of verses out of Deuteronomy that are very similar but have a different focus. One focuses on teaching, the other on learning.

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statues and judgements which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them." (Deuteronomy 5:1)

What does it mean to "learn?"

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgements which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. (Deuteronomy 4:1)

What does it mean to teach? How are these two concepts‑‑learning and teaching‑‑related? Are they as divorced from each other as we have come to believe?

In order to grasp the full meaning of these words, let's investigate the terms in the original Hebrew. The word learn in 5:1 is XYZAB and teach in 4:1 is XYZDE. When the prefix and the suffix are taken off of learn, all that remains is the root Hebrew word, XYZ. When the prefix and the suffix are take off the word teach, all that remains is the Hebrew root XYZ.

Can you believe that? It's the same word! That's right, the same Hebrew word means to learn and to teach. Do you realize the significance of that? We can't separate teaching from learning. They are married, they are one. Somehow and in some way what the teacher does and what the student does must be inextricable related.

There is a further insight into this Hebrew word for teach and learn. The root means "learn," but when you alter it and put it into another stem called the Piel, it changes the meaning to "teach."

According to Hebrew grammar, the fundamental idea of the Piel is "to busy oneself eagerly with the action indicated by the stem." What's the stem? "To learn." To teach, therefore, means to busy oneself eagerly with the student's learning. It also means "to urge," "to cause others to do," and "an eager pursuit of an action."

Do you see how the Bible's mindset is the opposite of the normal mindset? The Bible says that teaching means "causing learning." This is the heart of the Law of the Learner. No longer can you or I consider teaching merely as something the teacher does in the front of the class. Teaching is what the teacher does in the student. How do you know if you are a great teacher? By what your students learn.

That's why Dr. Hendricks stopped what he was doing and ran down the aisle to challenge me. He knew that because I wasn't learning, he wasn't teaching.

Can you imagine what would happen in the classrooms across the country if teachers returned to their rightful heritage? If they walked down the aisles, not with their outlines and notes, but with their students? If they vowed to be fully obedient to the biblical mandate of "causing to learn"? It would cause a revolution. Learning would once again soar, discipline would return, and students would start loving learning instead of hating school.

The Law of the Learning is illustrated by this diagram. The left box represents the "speaker" or the "communicator." The center box is the "subject" or "content." And the right box represents the "student" or "Class."

The two small arrows in this model represent the action of the teacher or the student. Normally, the teachers focuses on the subject‑‑"lectures" and speaks the "words"‑‑whereas the student "Listens" and "Writes" those words. Notice both of their points of attention‑‑it's on the process of covering the material. What often occurs is a thorough lack of learning. Students are free to move their minds into neutral with only their pencils in gear and all too often slide into the "Pit of Passivity."

The preferred mindset requires the teacher to refocus attention from the subject to the student. This is represented by the lower arrow pointing from the teacher to the student with the words, "Cause to Learn."

One of the most striking quotes I have read was from a frustrated inner‑city father about the educational system's dramatic failure to cause his daughter to learn:

You people operate a monopoly like the telephone company. I have no choice where I send my child to school. I can only go where it's free.

And she's not learning.

That's your responsibility, it's the principal's responsibility, it's the teacher's responsibility that she's not learning. And when you fail, when everybody fails my child, what happens? Nothing. Nobody gets fired. Nothing happens to nobody except my child.

How tragic. . . but how true! The 7 Laws of the Learner is written to enable you to turn this quote around. To teach so effectively that no one would ever consider looking out that window.

Learning Maxims

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

This second section, the Maxims, continues to develop the main concept introduced in the Mindset and Model. In order to clarify and expand your understanding, the "big idea" under consideration is investigated from a number of different angles and perspectives. A maxim is a brief statement of a general principle or truth, and therefore each of the maxims that follow reflect a different facet of "cause to learn." By the end of this section you should much more fully grasp the greater meaning and significance of what it really means to "cause to learn." The deeper and fuller your understanding, the easier it will be for you to use this truth in your own teaching.

Maxim 1: Teachers are responsible to cause students to learn.

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

It was a once‑in‑a‑lifetime opportunity to conduct an experiment. It was my first class on my first day of my first year of teaching college. My slate was clean and my reputation as yet unformed. My students had no way to know what to expect.

Class started and I began teaching the way I had been taught by my teachers. You know, the traditional outline with main points and sub points.

The students dutifully took notes. After about twenty‑five minutes, I said to my trusting class. "Please put away your papers, it's time for a test." You could almost hear their hearts stop‑‑in unison. They were freshmen, and this was their first class. When I announced a test‑‑on the first day‑‑their world almost came to an end. Finally the deafening silence was broken by a courageous girl in the back row: "But sir, we haven't even had a chance to study this yet."

"I know, but let's see how you do," I said. I offered no explanation or it would have ruined my experiment. There was rattling of notebooks as they dug for paper; then it got real quiet. I asked a few questions from the twenty‑five minutes of "teaching" I had just completed.

All but a couple of students failed. Royally. Tension was heavy, and I could read the glances that shot across the room‑‑"I'm transferring out of this guy 's class."

Then the girl in the back row raised her hand again. It was obvious she was used to getting As. "You can't count that!" she protested.

"Why not?"

"It's not fair. We didn't have a chance to learn it!"

"So how did you do on the test?" She looked down and said, "Sixty percent."

"What am I?" I asked.

"The teacher."

"And what's the teacher supposed to do? Teach the class, right?" I paused and smiled. "If I'm the teacher and I'm the one who is supposed to teach you to know the material, then how did I do so far? What grade would you give me?"

Their faces said they were bursting to tell me. "Young lady, if your test score revealed how effectively I taught you today, what grade would you give me?"

By now, no one was even breathing. Everything in this young lady wanted to tell me, but she didn't know if she should. So I told her. "Your grade is my grade. What you did or did not learn is dependent upon how I did as your teacher. So your grade of 60 percent designates me as a teacher who failed to his job. I failed to cause you to learn. Give me an F!"

The class was stunned.

I took off my coat, loosened my tie, and continued. "Now, why are you paying this college all this tuition and not expecting me to do my job? How come I can "teach" for thirty minutes and the whole class not learn anything? I thought my job is to learn you to learn."

They wanted to nod. Some wanted to cheer‑‑this was starting to make sense. "From now on, when you come to this class, I'll take the responsibility for your learning. If you'll come with an open mind‑‑and an open heart‑‑then I'll do my part as your teacher to fill it.

For the next twenty minutes I taught them. I taught them until the knew the material. Then I tested them on that material and all by two got an A. With a twinkle in my eye I told them we couldn't count the first test because I wouldn't want such incriminating evidence of my poor teaching recorded anywhere in print. Ah, the joys of college teaching!!

How many times have you and I sat through an hour‑long class, dutifully taken notes, and then met someone in the hall after class who asked us what we learned‑‑and we couldn't remember one thing! Would the Bible say that we had learned? That "Pit of Passivity" can suck us into its mire if we are not careful.

Are you sensing the utter importance of this mindset, that the teacher is the one who is responsible? Obviously, the students are responsible to learn the material‑‑but the teacher is responsible to cause them to know the material.

For the most part, the last few generations of teachers have been led to believe that they are not responsible, their students are. Any attempt to relate performance to teacher effectiveness quickly escalates into World War III.

Is our discussion really new or just forgotten? Have we not tragically abandoned what used to be clear? For instance, what do you think is the dictionary definition of teach? Want a shock? The dictionary defines teach as "to cause to know the subject," has the person who taught them been a good teacher? Perhaps many of today's teachers are irresponsible because they no longer consider themselves responsible for their student's learning.

At the very heart of The 7 Laws of the Learner is a total commitment to the full responsibility of the teacher to do everything in his power to cause the student to learn.

Years ago my son and I were talking about teaching, and I asked him if he ever had to learn anything over and over again.‑‑something that he was supposed to learn but didn't.

He laughed and said, "Yes! Language. You know how many times I've learned language, Dad? I still don't understand language."

I said, "Dave, you've never been taught language."

"What do you mean?"

"If you didn't learn it, your teacher didn't teach it to you."

"Sure she did. We were on language for weeks."

"Dave, did she keep teaching you until you learned it?"

"No, Dad, she said we had to move on."

"Were there other students in you class who also didn't learn it?"

He laughed, "Lots, Dad. Most of my friends didn't understand either. But, we had to move on in the book."

You can see it now, can't you? My son's grammar school teacher thought she was supposed to cover the book instead of teach her students. This law says that teacher really didn't teach, because he didn't cause her students to learn.

While we unequivocally state that the teacher is responsible, we must quickly add that this responsibility is shouldered by others as well: the students, their parents, other related and interested individuals, and society in general. The teacher is not solely responsible for the students, but he is the one under consideration in this book.

When people begin to understand this law, they begin to reclaim their responsibility. It's happened many times as I've taught this course around the world. the light goes on and the teacher realizes, "It's my responsibility." Then everything changes, because when you and I accept our rightful responsibility as God desires, learning soars.

One evening at dinner my son announced he wasn't gong to get a good grade in math. When I questioned further, he politely informed me, "Dad, those math grades are not my fault. My teacher is boring and class is terrible. He needs to come to the Seven Laws course because he is not causing any of us to learn.

My wife shot me a glance that said, "What on earth are you teaching our children?" and I realized this moment called for immediate innovation.

"Well, Son, you are forgetting the Law of the Student," I said.

"What? You never talked about that at the conference!"

"I know. I making it up right now for you and for all who would attempt to follow in your creative footsteps. The Law of the Student states that the student is responsible to learn regardless of the quality of the teacher. You see, Dave, when you are the teacher, teach like you are 100 percent responsible. When you are the student, learn like you are 100 percent responsible."

I could tell David didn't like this, but my wife sure did. "But then who's responsible, Dad‑‑me or my teacher?"

"Yes. You've got it Dave! You're both 100 percent responsible. And by the way, Son, I'm gong to be holding you responsible for your 100 percent in this course!"

(Dave comments made me remember Joseph Bayly's statement, "Never let school interfere with your child's education!")

Former U.S. Secretary of Education Shirley M. Hufstedler was right on when she said, "The secret to being a successful teacher is. . . to accept in a very personal way the responsibility for each student success or failure. Those teachers who do take personal responsibility for their students' success. . .produce higher achieving students."

My grandmother had it right years ago when, in a moment of frustration, she said to me, "I'm going to learn you, young man."

Maxim 2: Teachers will stand accountable to God for their influence.

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The partner to full responsibility is accountability. When someone delegates responsibility to us for a given project, usually we must give an account for our performance. God's Word clearly reveals that each of us is going to be held accountable to God for how we fulfilled his instructions.

For we must all appear before the judgment s eat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (I Cor.5:10).

There will be a future Day of Accountability. Not only will God hold us accountable for our motives, words, actions, and faithfulness, buy he also has announced that he will hold some of us additionally accountable. Repeatedly the Bible admonishes leaders about the seriousness of their responsibilities and its accompanying accountability.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgement (James 3:1).

James is clear: teachers will be more strictly judged by God because of their greater responsibility. God will hold us accountable, not only for how we live, but also for how we teach. We face a stricter judgement because of our role as teachers.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

The writer of Hebrews also notes that those who have positions of authority will give account. Because that is true, the author encourages the believers under those leaders to obey and submit to them, making it easier for them to fulfill their responsibility. It appears from this verse that not only will teachers be held accountable, but in some way so will the students.

There are several practical implications of this maxim. First, the only reason God can hold us accountable as teachers is because we are responsible! Second, God views the role and responsibility of teaching as extremely important. Don't allow society's current lack of respect for the teaching community to lessen the honor you give it. Third, allow the emphasis of Hebrews 13:17 to impact you fully. Remember, teachers "watch out for your souls," not just the test scores!

Finally, some classes and some students will be more inclined to cause you grief. Realize that such classes and individuals are part of the teaching territory. Even the Master Teacher himself had students such as the Sadducees and Pharisees and Sanhedrin who attacked not only his content but his reputation and eventually his life. Don't allow yourself to retreat into the false concept that when you teach for the right reasons and with all your heart, everything is automatically going to be wonderful. It may not! God never promised to give you a class that always responds joyfully to you and your subject.

So set your expectations clearly. Teach when you experience joy and teach when you feel grief. Teach because God has divinely called and commissioned you. Teach for your students' grade on Friday's test, and teach for your grade on the Final Test.

Maxim 3: Teachers are responsible because they control subject, style, and speaker.

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Although it may not always appear to be true, the teacher has incredible control in the teaching‑learning process. It's because of that control that the Lord can hold us accountable. Consider for a moment what the teacher has control over:

1. Full control over the subject. The teacher can control every word he speaks. If he wants to change the subject at any time and for whatever reason, he can. If he wants to give an illustration, he can. If he wants to go in depth in one area and skim over another, he can. If he wants to tell a joke to relieve a bored class, he can.

2. Full control over the style. The teacher also can control his delivery and method. If he wants to whisper or shout, stand still or jump, clap hands or fold his arms, it's all in his control. Likewise, he can employ small groups, or lecture, or discussion, or panel, or debate, or a film, or a skit. Dr. Hendricks changed his style repeatedly during those three minutes and thirty‑seven seconds in order to cause me to learn.

3. Full control over the speaker. The teacher also is in full control of himself. He can come dressed any way he wants, from formal to informal‑‑even a costume. He can come early and stay late. He can talk with the students or remain distant from them. He can sit, stand, or walk around. The teacher has full control over the speaker.

Do you see how very much control the teacher has over almost everything in the teaching‑learning process? It's amazing when you think about the incredible power and freedom of the teacher (within boundaries of course).

The teacher has control over every major element in the teaching‑learning process except one‑‑the student! If the teacher is supposed to cause the student to learn, and yet cannot control him, and how does this law work?

The teacher causes the student to learn by the correct and appropriate use of the subject, style, and speaker. Those three elements have the overwhelming power to cause the student to learn.

Do you know what an effective teacher does? Effective teachers control these three elements in the right way. Ineffective teachers don't.

Illustrations of this occur in classrooms across America every day. Just recently my daughter told me about one of her classes which is "just a disaster, Dad‑‑people talk all the time, throw things, don't learn anything." One week the usual teacher ( and I use that word begrudgingly) was sick and a substitute teacher cam in. Jennifer couldn't believe the difference. Within three minutes she didn't recognize the class. No one was talking‑‑they were learning and even enjoying the subject for the first time that semester.

Then Jennifer said something I'll never forget: "Dad, I know this is not very kind, but I kind of hope my regular teacher doesn't get better very soon."

We all can identify with that, can't we? It's sad . . . because it is unnecessary.

I can almost guarantee that the regular teacher had long ago decided the unruly class wasn't his fault‑‑it was just that they were completely out of control. The truth was, he was out of control because the was misusing the subject, style, and speaker.

Do you know the only real difference between those two experiences of my daughter? Notice what was the same:

The same school

The same subject

The same day of the week

The same students

The same class objectives

What then was the difference? Just be the teacher, right? Yes, but what about the teacher?

Not the color of hair

Not the height

Not the width

Not the type of clothes

Not the personality

Not the car driven

What then?

The only difference was the effective teacher knew how to cause the students to learn by readjusting what she did, what she said, and how she said it.

Master teachers develop such an advanced skill of understanding the teaching ‑learning process that they immediately recognize the problem that is hindering learning and then implement the corresponding solution.

Too often teachers cast blame with "something's wrong with my class" when the problem really lies with their class's teacher! The first step in solving this almost universal problem is to clearly identify the problem. Once the problem is obvious, then identifying and implementing the correct solution is much easier. (The learner Method‑‑which will be presented in the next chapter‑‑reveals how to determine the problems with its corresponding solution.)

Maxim 4: Teachers should judge their success by the success of their students

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Suppose you were a principal interviewing two candidates for high school science teacher. Which of these two candidate would you select?

Candidate A Female, forty‑eight‑years of age, married with three grown children, master's degree in science, twenty years of teaching experience, published numerous articles in magazines and journals, served on various administrative committees, working on a doctorate, hobby of gardening and raising award‑winning orchids.

Candidate B. Male, twenty‑five‑years of age, single but has a cat named Whiskers, bachelor's degree in science, three years of teaching experience, no published articles or books, served on building and grounds committee, considering starting master's next couple of years, hobby water skiing and volunteers at the nearby zoo.

It's decision time. Would you hire candidate A or B?

Believe it or not, you have no way of knowing. If the definition of teach is "cause to learn," then none of the above information gives me any clue as to the real teaching ability of either.

Not the gender

Not the age

Not the marital status

Not the earned degrees

Not the articles published

Not the committees served

Not the hobbies

Not even the years of teaching experience

Of course, their credentials are relevant and important. But none of them tell us anything about how effective that person will be in the classroom because they all center around the teacher, not what the teacher can do in the lives of the students. Both of these candidates could be dismal teachers, or they could be outstanding.

The only fact which indisputably proves what kind of teachers the candidates will make is how their previous students performed at the end of a school year compared to the start of the class in the fall.

After teaching this Law of the Learner in a recent conference, a well‑dressed businessman of about fifty came striding up to the platform. It was obvious he had something on his mind. "I decided after all these years in business to go back to graduates school and earn my MBA," he said. "But something recently happened that really upset me. I had to take a course on statistics, and the teacher was the chairman of the entire MBA program. I couldn't wait to study under this great teacher‑‑but do you know what she said on the first evening we met? She said that this course is so tough that more than 70 percent of us would fail!

"At first I was so impressed. I thought, what a teacher this is! But, now I realize the opposite is true‑‑she isn't that hot of a teacher. Only 30 percent of her class even passed!"

The businessman's conclusion was right. This professor may be a great leader, a smart woman, and an outstanding author, but her performance as a teacher earns her a dismal grade. Never forget this. Teachers cause students to learn the material, and great teachers cause great numbers of students to learn great amounts of material.

Not only do we hire people on the wrong basis, we also reward and promote on the wrong basis. Which of the two teachers listed below would get the higher recognition, promotion, and financial reward? These two high school teachers teach the same subject to the same age to the same type of students in the same school.

1. Teacher A completes his second master's degree, whereas Teacher B's students score 25 percent higher than Teacher's A students on the SAT exams for that subject.

2. Teacher A publishes three articles in a professional magazine, whereas Teachers B's students win three blue ribbons in the subject at the statewide competition.

3. Teacher A serves on the education committee for the county, whereas Teacher B's students average a full grade higher on their reports cards.

4. Teacher A receives the majority of the teachers' votes for the "Teacher of the Year" award; Teacher B' was fifteenth on the list. Teacher B receives the majority of the students' votes for the "Teacher of the Year" award, and Teacher A was fifteenth on the list.

The philosophy assumed in this book is that though the activities and committees and degrees are undeniably important, the most important test of teacher effectiveness is student performance.

Sometimes the very things we promote can lessen the effectiveness of the teaching process. It was an all too common joke among the students when I was in graduate school that the more degrees behind a teacher's name, the less effective the teacher probably was. More knowledge doesn't necessarily make a better teacher. This may sound untraditional, but it would be interesting to test student performance before and after a teacher receives his next degree.

Now, don't misinterpret me. I'm all for further education and am constantly encouraging others to pursue further study. I attend courses, watch training videos, listen to tapes, read books, and attend seminars. But the focus always must be upon the results of those educational activities, not the accumulation of them.

It's what the student does that counts, not what the teacher does, If the student has succeeded, then so has the teacher.

Maxim 5: Teachers impact more by their character and commitment than by their communication.

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This maxim compares the impact of "who the teacher is" (character and commitment) with "what the teacher says" (communication). Character out‑influences communication every time.

Consider your own career as a student. Pick out two or three of your favorite teachers. I'll bet your selection had more to do with what you thought of them than what you thought of their talk.

Those timeless proverbs‑‑"What you do speaks more clearly than what you say," and "Actions speak louder than words"‑‑are true. When words and actions are in opposition, actions always overpower words.

Unfortunately, the world and the church often sing the tune that words are all that matter. Recently a deacon of a local church told me the deacon board just voted six to three to keep the church's pastor, a man in the middle of divorcing his wife to marry another married woman in the same church!

I asked him how his church could rebel so blatantly against the principles of Scripture. "Oh," he said, "our pastor is such a wonderful preacher we don't want to let him go. Besides, a larger church in another state has offered him another senior pastor's position. We'll probably have to offer our pastor a large raise to keep him, but almost everybody wants him except for a few hard‑nosed conservatives."

Is it possible for that pastor to openly sin, splitting his own family and another woman's, and still be a powerful preacher?

Yes, I believe it is.

Some of the world's "greatest" teachers and preachers are openly opposed to Christ. Many of the men who hold the most powerful pulpits of the land do not hold to the doctrines of the virgin birth, the inspiration of the Bible, the resurrection of Christ, or even the deity of Christ. Yet their powers of oratory and persuasion are remarkable. Their words can bring all of us to tears. But being moved emotionally does not always equate with God's affirmation nor his blessing.

We err greatly when we think that just because a man or woman can teach effectively or pastor graciously or preach powerfully that the hand of the Lord must be on that life. The hand of the Lord cannot be upon a person who rejects the deity of Christ; the Bible labels him an "enemy of the gospel."

When that church chose to retain its pastor, it took a public stand for sin and against the Savior. The unbelieving community will once again blaspheme the cause of Christ because even it knows a moral outrage when it sees one.

But what about that preacher's preaching? Come back in five years and you'll see the fruits that are now being planted. You can already begin to see the word Ichabod being etched over the entry‑way. I've seen it happen too many times, without exception. God's principles for ministry have always been the same: first the character, then the communication. That's why I Timothy and Titus are so clear‑‑the life of the communicator must first be in harmony with the message before he speaks the message.

In fact, character will always control the content‑‑eventually. When the Spirit of God is quenched and sin is given free reign, not only will the Spirit not be present in the teaching, but soon neither will the Scriptures. The teacher or preacher will begin to shape the content to match his lifestyle. I shudder to think of that pastor, his new wife, and those six deacons when they stand accountable before another Court for the travesty they have wrought.

When I ask adults to select the teacher who most influenced them, it is always the one who had the most noble character and commitment. Those teachers usually were not the easiest nor the hardest in the classroom, but something about them a roused genuine respect and admiration. We, their students, wished that someday we could be like them.

May your students desire to be like their teacher!

Maxim 6: Teachers exist to serve the students.

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Everyone enjoys going out to a nice restaurant for a delicious meal, graciously served. How would you respond if the next time you visited your favorite restaurant and asked for some water, the waitress said. "Get it yourself! What are you, helpless? I'm not your slave, you know!" You'd soon leave that place, thinking that the service was the worst you'd ever seen. You's probably never return.

You view that waitress as your servant. Part of what you pay for is her willingness to serve you‑‑that is her job. If, however, you were out on a picnic a couple of days later and saw that same waitress and asked her to get you some water, how do you think she would respond?" The roles we play in certain situations influence the behavior we feel is appropriate.

Now consider the role of teacher. Who in the classroom is supposed to serve the water and re fill the plate and ask the people if there is anything else they would like? Unfortunately, many of us in the teaching‑preaching profession have forgotten that we are servants. Most classes have a severe case of "role reversal" from all appearances the student has become the servant. Teachers have forgotten that they exist to meet the needs of their students, not their own needs.

Why is this problem so easy to recognize when it surfaces in the restaurants but so difficult to recognize in the classroom?

I remember the first time I had to speak in front of a large audience many years ago. My heart was racing, knees shaking, palms sweating, and I was frantically praying that maybe God would help me out by initiating the Second Coming right then. Sitting next to me on the platform was a well‑known, seasoned speaker. While we were singing the hymn right before I had to speak, I turned to him and said, "I'm so nervous! I don't know if I can do this."

Without batting an eye, this great man said, "Bruce, don't be so proud and self‑conscious."

That's not something you like to hear right before you speak. So I asked him, "What do you mean?"

"You are so concerned about yourself, and how you will do, and what the people will think about you‑‑that's why you are nervous. If you'd get your eyes off yourself for a moment and on the people in front of you and start caring about meeting their needs, not your own, you'd stop being so nervous. You see, it's only when we are self conscious rather than other‑conscious that we become so very nervous. When we focus on serving our audience, then the Lord is free to use us."

Then he smiled and went back to singing the hymn as if nothing had happened. And I went back to the Lord for a moment of divine readjustment and purpose fully stopped serving my needs and started attending to my audience's needs. Most of the butterflies headed south for the season, or at least they begin flying in formation.

Serving students can be much like loving our children. Often we do things for our children that we think communicate love to them, but they don't receive it that way. Similarly, many times I think teachers strive to serve their students, but their student don't feel it. Perhaps it's because the teachers unconsciously do things that communicate the very opposite of their intentions.

Throughout this book I will present many ways to concretely serve your student‑‑ways they recognize and appreciate. In the Law of Expectation you'll learn practical ways to communicate love to your students. In the Law of Need you'll learn the secrets Christ used to motivate his students to want what he was going to teach. In the Law of retention, you will be exposed to some revolutionary approaches that will enable you to "speed teach" material.

All Seven Laws of the Learner are focused on this very issue‑‑How does the teacher truly serve the student in the classroom? As you began to understand these laws and practice them, you will see frustration replaced by motivation. You'll have an incredible set of transferable skills that will work with any subject you are teaching to any age student. How can we make these claims?: Because these principles are universal, like gravity, and when you and I practice them, our students feel served.

Join the small band of teachers who enter the classroom with clear resolve and unwavering purpose to serve your students with all of your heart, all of your mind, and all of your soul.

Maxim 7: Teachers who practice the Laws of the Learner Teacher can become master teachers.

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There was an opening for a teaching position in a junior high school in Dallas, and a number of people applied. Finally they screened the candidates down to two finalists.

The first man had taught school for thirty‑five years; the other candidate was in only her second year of teaching. The experienced teacher with all the credentials was sure he would get the job. But by the end of the week, the young woman was chosen

The older man was livid. He stormed into the personnel committee meeting, demanding to know why he wasn't hired‑‑after all, he was the one with thirty‑five years of experience. The wise administrator paused for a moment and then answered, "Sir, it's true you have been teaching for thirty‑five years, but I could not see any improvement over those years. The way I see it, you had one year of experience repeated thirty‑five times!"

Unlike the popular notion that great teachers are just born, I believe master teachers are not born, not manufactured, but just improved! To believe that people are born great teachers is an illogical as believing that people are born great scientists. Of course, there are varying degrees of innate ability, but the majority of people who achieve in their fields do so with persistent effort over a long period of time.

Blot out of your thinking the other false concept that greatness comes through gigantic steps of improvement. Real effectiveness if developed through many years of improving just a few steps at a time.

Every year at the ministry of Walk Thru the Bible we are concrete proof of this truth. We have a tradition of publicly recognizing the top ten Walk Thru the Bible instructors each year. Inevitable there is at least one surprise. One year, I had some intense discussions with our dean of faculty about one of our lowest‑rated instructors. We have a high standard of excellence for our seminar faculty, and I kept encouraging our dean to dismiss this man. Finally he said, "Give this man one more year of opportunity to improve. If he doesn't, I'll be the first to vote to let him go."

I questioned why he was so supportive of this marginal performance, and he said, "this man is working harder to improve himself than anyone else on the WTB faculty. He is watching the videos of the best teacher, having his wife and friends constantly evaluate him, always asking me for ways to improve. I believe he can do it, and he deeply wants to."

The next year, when evaluations were made to determine the top ten, guess who had achieve it? This same man I was ready to dismiss the year before. did he have those rare abilities to make it naturally to the top tine? No, he didn't. The best rarely are composed of the people who have the most natural talent, but rather by those few who have a passion to fulfill their God‑given talents and reach the top of their potential.

http://www.joshhunt.com/7LAWS.html

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Biblical Storytellers by Dennis Dewey

Story ‑ Developing

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A Select Bibliography for Biblical Storytellers by Dennis Dewey

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Dyin' On the Platform - 4/2001.101

"What to Say When You're Dyin' On the Platform!" book by Lilly Walters, from McGraw Hill

It's just amazing how many things can ... and do ... go wrong when you

give a presentation. Having strategies and "saver‑lines" at the ready

can make the difference between being a brilliant communicator or

watching yourself die a slow painful death up there. Following are a

just a few scenarios, savers and solutions you should keep in mind

when you present, with special advice from successful speakers,

executives and entertainers.

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818‑335‑6127

So, what should you do and say when ..

YOU TRIP ON THE WAY TO THE LECTERN

TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING

Before you stand up to walk to the lectern, take a deep breath, get

"centered," then stand up and walk. Go slow. Your adrenaline is

running at a much ‑ MUCH ‑ faster pace than the audiences. So although

you feel like you are crawling slowly to the lectern, they are seeing

you scurry along at a good clip. Slow down.

WHAT TO DO

So you trip. Y'all know no one really minds that you trip. Chevy Chase

made a career out it. They mind if you get hurt. They mind if you seem

upset or angry. Just be light hearted about it and it will set the

stage for a great presentation. They like you better when you're human

and have faults ‑ especially if you can laugh at them. Turn it into a

gag, overstate it. Make it so big that the audience thinks it's so

exaggerated, it must be part of the act. ‑ Ron Lee

WHAT TO SAY

Tah dah! (Put you hands in the air as if you planned it) ‑ Terry

Paulson I think I may have stumbled onto something back there. ‑ Roger

Langley Thank you. That was my impersonation of Chevy Chase (or Gerald

Ford, Dick Van Dyke, John Ritter, Evel Knievel) ‑ John Nisbet Hey,

it's an acquired skill. ‑ Bob Burg Practice, practice, practice. ‑ Jim

McJunkin So, let me tell you how things are going at charm school. ‑

Steve Gottlieb

YOU SWEAT

TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING

Remember the movie "Broadcast News" (Twentieth Century Fox), with

Albert Brooks? One day Albert's character finally gets his big chance

to anchor the news. In front of the camera his body goes crazy. He can

barely see from the sweat pouring down his face and into his eyes.

Yes, it can happen to anyone. (Please God, not me!) It might happen to

you for several reasons: 1. It's hot In which case, everyone else is

sweating too, and nobody really cares 2. You're physically ill 3.

You're having a nervous attack. Now this we can do something about.

This sort of nervousness will hit you when you think are bombing.

Simply go the the material you are 100% comfortable with, and deliver

that. If it is going to be your first time up there, you will cure 75%

of your fears through rehearsal and preparation.

WHAT TO DO

Break them into discussion groups. While they are talking among

themselves ‑ calm down. Go over your notes, cut the things you are not

feeling comfortable about. Firmly think of the three things you want

them to take home. Go back into the speech with those three things in

mind. Don't worry about the presentation being too short; they'll

rarely complain about that.

WHAT TO SAY

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. ‑ Winston

Churchill What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps me in a

continual state of inelegance. ‑ Jane Austin, 1775‑1817, Englist

novelist. There must be something very sensual about speaking in front

of this audience. This doesn't normally happen to me. ‑ Terry

Braverman

YOUR FEET HURT

TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING

Normally your feet go on strike when you are doing a several hour

program. Although your feet may hurt in a shorter session, your

adrenaline will carry you through and you most likely won't notice. I

was in a musical where I had to do two hours barefoot. No problem

until I pulled a tendon in my foot and it kept screaming at me when I

stepped on it. But every time a cue came for me to go on, I forgot

everything but the show. I was not being brave, the pain just went

away while I was performing, waiting in the wings again was another

story. However, if your doggies are barking at the end of an 8 hour

session, the old adrenaline rush that carried you that far is pretty

much gone. So some smarter tactics ‑ other than relying solely on your

enthusiasm ‑ are a super idea. One obvious strategy is to wear

comfortable shoes ‑ ladies. Yes, ladies. We are worst for wanting to

show off a nice thin (looking) calf ‑ which is why some masochist

female invented high heels. The downward slant of the foot makes the

calf ever so much more attractive. But, if at the end of 8 hours they

are still thinking about your calves and not your content, you might

as well try a new career. Wear shoes you know you can wear all day,

low heels, good support and padding (running shoes would be great if I

felt I could get away with it :::sigh:::, and no, we can't). NEVER

present or perform in new shoes, unless you are going to be seated for

the whole presentation! Try them out someplace else, make sure to wear

them for the same amount of time you will standing on them.

WHAT TO DO

Go into the restroom, run the water as hot as you can get it. Take

your shoes, one at a time, and allow the water to totally saturated

the inside and outside of the leather. Make the wetness even, or your

shoes will look wet. Shake them off and use a paper or cloth towel to

dry them a bit more. Now put the wet (and yes squishy) shoes on your

feet and go back to work. The wet, even though warm, is soothing to

your feet. The hot water loosens the leather which helps combat the

chaffing. As the leather dries it conforms to your foot, not the foot

of some model back at the shoe factory. Because you carefully wet the

whole shoe, it will just appear darker in color, not wet to the

audience. Soaking your shoes can't be very good for their longevity.

But, your performance, and your lack of pain, are more important than

a few months added to your shoe's life! Better the shoes early demise

than your feet! I hesitate to mention this, but when I went to

Australia, guess who used brand new shoes for her full day programs?

Yeah, yeah, yeah Š that's why they asked me to write my last book,

"What to Say When You're Dyin' On the Platform!" (McGraw Hill,

March,1995) ‑ I've done plenty of dumb things. Within the first hour

of the seminar I do a section on how important it is to be physically

comfortable in order to teach well. Well there I was, with my footsies

were hurting big time already! Inspiration hit, I said, "The most

important thing is for you to let go of your worries of how they think

about you! You need to concentrate on them! If your shoes hurt ‑ get

rid of them!" and I kicked my shoes off with a great show and said

with great sincerity, "They are not important," pointing at the shoes,

"the audience, their needs and wants is what matters. That is what you

are there for." I saw all their eyes glaze as they filled with

inspiration. I'm thinking, whoa, that stays in. I did the entire rest

of the day barefoot.

WHAT TO SAY

(make a big show of dramatic, limping ) It is better to die on your

feet than to live on your knees! Thank goodness I don't have my brains

in my feet. (look at an audience member and say), Never mind, don't

say it. ‑ Lilly Walters

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818‑335‑6127 Lilly Walters is a best selling author, she is a featured

author in the "Chicken Soup for the Soul," series of products and the

author of "What to Say When You're Dying On the Platform!" (McGraw

Hill, 1995) "Secrets of Successful Speakers" (McGraw Hill, 1993).

"Speak and Grow Rich" (Prentice‑Hall, 1988 and 1996)

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Secrets of Successful Speaker

- 4/2001.101

Your Image From the Platform by Lilly Walters

Secrets of Successful Speakers ‑

How You Can Motivate, Captivate and Persuade"

(McGraw Hill, 1993).

Chosen as a major selection by Fortune Book Club, and a selection of

Book‑of‑the‑Month Club and Business Week Book Club. In 1996 it was

selected as one of the top most valuable books ever written from

professional speakers. For more of the top products for professional

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91740‑1120

What makes you attractive on the platform? Here are some tips from the

masters of the spoken word about your clothes, mannerisms, and your

image form the inside out. Secrets have been included in this article

from these Masters of the Spoken Word: Dr. Ken Blanchard, Harvey

Diamond, Bobbie Gee, Hermine Hilton, Danielle Kennedy, Stew Leonard,

Jr., Dr. Layne Longfellow, W Mitchell, Mona Moon, Judi Moreo, Tom

Ogden, Dr. Terry Paulson, Rosita Perez, and Gene Perret.

"More often than not a speaker's image will remain in a person's mind

long after the words have been forgotten. You can never be over

dressed or too polite. It sends a message of the respect you hold for

your audience."

Harvey Diamond, Author "Fit For Life", Lecturer, Wellness Pioneer

How To Decide On Your Personal Image

Whenever you see pictures in magazines and newspapers, which ever

image makes you stop and think, 'I like that!', then clip them out. I

keep mine in a folder in my desk. Before I go out to buy an outfit, I

review the pictures in my folder. Think about the mood you want to

create with the presentation. Do you want this audience to feel

interactive and warm? Do you have enough time to establish your

expertise? Will your power image need to say it all? How much

authority do you really want to exude? Look at the pictures you have

collected and decide which images match the ambiance you want to

create. What they don't teach you in image seminars is that

everybody's idea of "power" is different. When I do my seminar, I show

a series of slides, with two people in each slide. I use the slide to

show what subtle differences in dressing and image does to the

perspective of power. The first time I used these slides in a seminar

was a real adventure. I put the first slide up and asked the audience,

who of the two people in this photograph has the greatest authority?

To me, it was crystal clear. But my audience was split right in half!

This was not the point I was trying to make at all. Luckily I had two

more slides ‑ I tried again. Same result. Half agreed with me, the

other half thought the other person in the slide had more power. Same

thing happened with the third slide! Every time I do the seminar I get

the same result. I have no doubts in my mind which of the people has a

greater 'power' image. It came as a shock to me that once you get past

some rather basic rules of image ‑ dark suit, solid colors, clean,

ironed, etc., the rest is up for grabs.

So what is a "power" image for speakers? It's whatever makes you feel

like a presenter who can move and motivate an audience.

"I want my appearance and demeanor on the platform to be first rate ‑‑

whether it's something I buy or something I have to develop. It's not

so important that the audience knows it; it's more important that I

know and feel it." ‑Gene Perret Humorist and Head‑Writer for Bob Hope

"'I yam what I yam." (Popeye).

"I wear flowers in my hair and tell them why that's important to me. I

like dramatic vibrant colors and sleeves that 'move' to emphasize my

gestures. I always consider my comfort up there as I use a guitar to

make my points. I do what works for me!" Rosita Perez President,

Creative Living Programs, Inc., motivational speaker

"The audience starts forming their opinions of you from the first

moment they see you. If you make a mistake, make it on the

conservative side."‑ Judi Moreo, motivational keynote speaker

Tips for Fabulous Fashion in the Footlights

Fashion in the footlights is not governed by the same rules that tell

us what is appropriate fashion when we are one‑on‑one. As a presenter,

you need to dress for success from across the room. When you try on

the clothes you are considering using on the platform, do you stand

about five feet from your mirror as you review your image? I always

did. Until it hit me one day. The audience will be 10 to several

hundred feet away! Lines, colors and images change drastically when

seen from a distance ‑ as your audience sees you. Walk way across the

room from your mirror. Walk as far as the majority of your listeners

are from you on the platform, and then decide if you like what you

see. Men, that patterned tie looks great up close. But it confuses

your audiences eyes from a distance and distracts from their

concentration on your topic.

"I watched a famous woman golfer speak once. She carried a huge white

handbag loaded with junk and plunked it on the lectern. We looked at

it throughout her presentation. I don't remember a word she said, but

I do remember the handbag."

‑ Judi Moreo

How Much Authority Do You Want Your image to Generate?

Before we go on with tips on how to create an authority or power image

from the platform, ask yourself, "How much power and authority do I

want my appearance to generate?" If you project too much "authority",

your listeners will never "know how much you care" because they'll

assume you're not the caring type. Authoritative people seem to create

that kind of environment. So, you may want to dress with less than the

look of The Absolute Authority. Still, you need to know what the rules

are of creating an authority power image before you can break them Š

or before you decide if you want to break them. If you're presenting

for only an hour, you don't have as long to build credibility with

people. You need to rely on your image more heavily to help you

establish credibility. If you have several hours, it won't matter how

good your image is. If you don't follow the other steps in growing

this tree, your listeners will see right through the temporary effect

you create with your image.

Tips On Creating an Authority/Power Image For Men

John T. Molloy author of the world famous book, Dress For Success said

in a keynote I heard , "There are only three appropriate colors for

men in a business setting ‑ 'dull, dark and drab.' I think a step or

so beyond Mr. Molloy's "Drab" category is acceptable. A good quality

suit, perhaps just a shade or so lighter than the traditional dark

grey, black or dark blue, but still within that realm of "dull and

dark" can be very nice and at the same time help the speaker stand out

on the platform. If you have any doubts as to what the standard

traditional "success" look is, see Mr. Molloy's Dress for Success.

Tips On Creating an Authority/Power Image For Women

Women have a tougher time than men figuring out what to wear in a

business setting. Since the turn of the century, men have been wearing

"dull, dark, drab" trousers, vest, and jacket. Sure, the lapels and

tails changed slightly, but a man's suit has hardly changed at all

compared with women's fashions. At the turn of the century, women wore

Victorian bustles, huge hats with feathers, ribbons, and stuffed birds

draped in odd places ‑ over their shoulders and on their heads. Not

what you see walking into the boardroom today! Men have only worn

"dull, dark, drab," this entire century. Women have been appropriate

in the entire color spectrum. So as we have entered the business

world, it has made it hard for us to decide what is acceptable to

wear. Here are a few quick guidelines:

Subdued, solid colors will make you appear more authoritative.

The higher the neckline, the less frivolous you appear.

A tailored look gives you more power and authority. "Tailored" means

form fitting, not baggy. If you want a more powerful look, and you're

wearing something that's meant to button, button it. It's natural and

stylish for women to have a blouse left unbuttoned at the top. Or a

jacket that should button, worn open. It's a "pretty" look, but it

immediately takes away from your authority.

If you want more authority, put your hair up and pull it away from

your face in a tighter, tailored look.

A high heel gives you more sophistication.

Power Image Tips For the "First Impression"

Image is based on people's first impression assumptions (which, by the

way, are often wrong.) Your performance on stage will change their

"first impression" anyway Š but it won't hurt to try and create a good

first impression that might help get your message home. Here are a few

ideas on image assumptions you may not have thought of:

For more authority, a dark suit rather than a sports jacket and

slacks.

Graying hair and wrinkles that put you into the 45 ‑ 65 category, have

more authority than dark shiny hair and a youthful complexion.

Someone with a suntanned look, always seems too casual. People assume

a serious professional would not have time to sit in the sun.

Wearing glasses makes people think you read more, are more

intelligent, and older so therefore they assume you are more

intelligent. (If you wear them on the platform, get the non‑glare kind

so people in the audiences are not looking at two little mirrors

reflecting lights into their eyes.)

"Taller" gives your appearance more authority. "Taller" has very

little, if anything, to do with real authority and power. We are only

talking about the first impressions. Someone who stands tall can give

/much the same power image effect.

Using Color To Persuade and Enhance Your Image

A Munich Psychological Institute study showed that children improved

their I.Q. scores if they were tested in rooms painted with "happy"

colors: light blue, yellow and orange. But those who were tested in

rooms painted in "ugly" colors ‑ black, brown and white ‑ got lower

scores. You can use color psychology to help create moods within your

audiences too. First, decide how much authority and power you want to

create, then use color as tool to help you achieve it. You can use

color in the room and in your materials as well as in your clothes.

Color Meanings

Dark Colors: have more authority, power and control.

Brights: are more attention getting so they will keep peoples

attentive.

Blue: most likely the most popular color. When you wear dark blue,

people think you are intelligent, knowledgeable, credible, powerful,

and you have a solid strength (than red, which is also an action

color.) Soft blues, i.e.: sky blue, are calming.

Red: is energetic and dynamic. A strength color, but one that implies

movement, danger, fast things happening.

Yellow: is bright, cheerful, action color. It's also a high anxiety

color.

Brown: can be very calming. Unfortunately, it can be so calming it's

boring. In theater, they often put the person who is not supposed be

"smart" in a brown suit.

Black: is very authoritative. But it can be too authoritative and

overwhelming with the result that some will want to keep their

distance.

White: is clear and crisp, and contributes to an appearance of purity

and youthfulness. But under spotlights, it can be glaring, because the

lights will bounce right back off the white you wear and into their

eyes. The audience won't see your face, just a white suit. When you

are on television, don't wear white. Men: even your shirt ‑ wear a

blue shirt, off‑white, ivory, anything but white. It makes you look

pale and creates technical problems for the camera people as the

lights jump off the white and create spots.

Pastels: may make you appear soft, perhaps even weak.

Choosing the Type and Color of Material For Your Clothes

Patterns make your eyes blink. Every time your eye blinks, it takes

away from the brain's concentration on the topic. When we look at you

from across the room, we should see you, not your necklace, tie or

jewelry. Don't buy fabrics that have a shine or glimmer under bright

lights. (Beware ‑ lights in department stores, are not the same type

that hit you on stage.) Be careful or you will be shining a light into

your audience's eyes, almost like a mirror. Instead, buy material with

subdued colors and solid patterns. A very subtle pattern or a very

light pin strip is acceptable.

"People tell me again and again my wheelchair and my unique physical

appearance pretty much disappears. My movement back and forth across

the stage are just one more sign that helps convey that although I am

disabled I am not unable."

‑ W Mitchell, motivational speaker and author

Coordinate Your Colors With More Than Just Your Hair and Skin Colors

You decide on a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, solid steel blue

tie. Now you walk out in front of the audience in front of that dark

blue backdrop. Lights! Camera! Action! Š and you disappear! Great for

a magic show. Not so good for a business presentation. To avoid this,

wear a color that makes you stand out from the background. Try to

coordinate your colors so you don't clash with the room color.

How do you know what the room color will be? Before you get dressed ‑

preferably the night before ‑ check out your entire room set‑up,

including room color. If this is impossible, bring two suits, a dark

and a light.

My choice of clothing comes from a heart decision. What can I wear

today to make my audience feel good about me and about themselves? I

want my clothes to merely be a frame around the love that permeates

from my heart."

‑ Danielle Kennedy, M.A., Professional speaker, author of "Selling the

Danielle Kennedy Way"

It's Hard to Persuade Anyone When Your Feet Hurt

Wear "wearable" clothes. Try your outfit on for a nice long period, at

least as long as the presentation. If it's a several day presentation,

one day is enough. If you're pulling at your drawers, or cringing

every time you take a step because your shoes are too tight, you won't

have the concentration to be able to persuade your audience to do

anything. Your focus turns from them to yourself. Women have a more

difficult time than men when it comes to shoes. Men wear shoes that

are meant to be walked in. Women have been taught that high heels are

"the thing" for the well dressed business‑woman. If you can stand in

high heels from sunup 'till sundown and not feel excruciating pain,

your feet don't have nerve endings or you're a masochist! Ladies,

let's be honest, there is only one reason to wear high heels Š they

make our calves look thinner. But no presenter has ever told me, "I

had them in the palm of my hand! Persuaded and motivated! Suddenly,

someone looked at my legs and said, 'Oh heavens! She has heavy calves!

How can she possibly know what she's talking about?" I, on the other

hand, have taken a stand for women's rights. I just don't care how

heavy my calves look when I'm on the platform (when I'm on a date it's

a different story!) When I'm giving a full day session I've decided to

wear shoes I can walk, move and be energetic in all day long. True,

adrenaline will often carry me through the first day, regardless of

how uncomfortable I am. But at the end of that day I have sat in my

hotel room in tears because of my silly vain choice of shoes. Day two

was not a pretty picture. Mona Moon, has a clever trick. She has a set

of high heels which she wears until lunch. She buys flats in the same

material which she slips on for the afternoon. No one ‑ but me ‑

seemed to notice. Nice compromise, smart idea.

"Never wear white shoes ‑ unless you want your audience to look at

your feet the entire presentation."‑ Bobbie Gee

Match the Meeting's Ambiance

If they're having a Western Hoe‑down, or a Hawaiian luau, dress to

match the mood. You look pretty silly if you come out in a tux and

they have jeans and cowboy boots on. It's important for the speaker to

help the meeting planner create the mood and environment for their

event. Find out what the majority of your audience will be wearing ‑

and dress just a tad nicer. Don't give all of your authority away by

dressing "too casually", but don't spoil their fun either. Just

because it's at the beach and they will be wearing bathing suits, does

not mean you should! You should be in a casual outfit, perhaps a

muslin type Caribbean looking suit. (Men, this might be a great time

to pull those white suits out of storage!)

"I come dressed up, but I'm ready to dress down to make a human

connection to the audience. The first impression should match your

introduction and the credibility you want to build. Even when I'm told

to dress casual, I start off in a suit and take off my coat after they

know I have one! Once you have connected with an audience, they won't

care what you look like. But 30% of an audience can be so

image‑oriented that inappropriate attire can turn them off in a way

you will never be able to recover. Never be afraid to ask what is

appropriate and then, as a rule of thumb go one step up from what they

ask for."

‑ Terry L. Paulson, Ph.D., CSP, CPAE, Psychologist and Professional

Speaker, author of "They Shoot Managers, Don't They?"

Make Up (Gentlemen, don't skip this section!)

Yes, I mean you too. The tiniest bit of oil in your skin looks very

shiny to the audience and in photographs. A bit of face power every

hour of so does wonders. If you have never purchased face power, go to

any department store that has a make‑up counter. Men, just look

helpless and explain to the nice attendant you are a presenter ‑ you

need something to cut the glare under the lights. They'll be very

understanding and helpful.

"I often use a light amount of face make up on my nose and temples,

especially if there is a spot light, I never use a lip gloss, it looks

like lip stick. If I'm playing to a crowd of 2,000 or more, eye liner.

Wives or girl friends will love to give you lessons.

‑ Tom Ogden Master Magician and comedian

How To Hide Nervous Shaking

Even tried and true masters of the platform can loose their control

and start to shake. Not a good image enhancement technique. Here are a

few tricks to help you appear normal in an abnormal situation.

Don't hold your notes or workbooks in your hands. Find something to

set them on. When you shake, so does whatever you are holding.

Take your hands and put them behind your back. Notice the way the

Royal families always stand. Maybe they get a bit nervous too.

Grasp your lectern if the shakes hit you. It's not a power stance, you

should be naturally gesturing. But watching you shake uncontrollably

is much worse than watching you hang on to the lectern.

Try giving a simple group exercise. This gives you a few minutes to

get hold of yourself, go back over your notes and visualize the

audience being uplifted. It will soothe, calm you and get you back in

control.

"Clothes should match the audience. You can choose your clothes and

you can train your voice, but your personality is best the opposite ‑‑

unchosen, untrained, natural."

‑ Dr. Layne Longfellow president of Lecture Theatre

Image ‑ From the inside Out

It's good to get rid of the obvious habits that might distract

listeners. However, all image problems are just symptoms of how you

feel about yourself. The presenters who have the greatest impact on

their audiences follow very few of the traditional "rules" of image.

Tom Peters paces back and forth across the stage and often looks like

he slept in his clothes. Ken Blanchard often wears a sports coat.

Hermine Hilton a memory expert, wears pants instead of a skirt and her

hair often looks like she forgot to brush it when she got up that

morning. Yet all three leave their audiences wanting more and raving

about their fantastic impact. If you have an obvious "flaw" in your

image, i.e.: "too fat," "icky voice," "too short," "handicapped," not

"educated enough," please understand, the audience is not very

concerned about you. They are concerned about what you are going to do

to make them feel better. Consider your impression of the following

list of presenters ‑ did their "flaws" effect the brilliance of their

presentations

"too fat," Winston Churchill

"icky voice," Helen Keller

"handicapped," Franklin D. Roosevelt

not "educated enough," Will Rogers

"You know what happens, people get too worried with this looking like

a professional speaker deal. Everybody tells you, 'Here's how to give

an executive presentation ' and 'You're suppose to wear a blue suit

and red tie.' And you know what happens? Here's a lively, colorful,

dynamite person that is stuffed into this square box. All the

enthusiasm and excitement is just drained right out of them. You

should try to look nice up there, but more important, look like you."

‑ Stew Leonard Jr., President of "Stew Leonards" in Connecticut

(Featured in "In Search of Excellence" by Tom Peters

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Inspire Any Audience - Proven Secrets of the Pros for Powerful Presentations by Tony Jeary

- 4/2001.101

Inspire Any Audience :

Proven Secrets of the Pros for Powerful Presentations

by Tony Jeary

Chapter 3

Secret Steps for Going from Nervous to Natural

I am preparing to do the final editing on a new book that I am working

on entitled Disciplemaking Teachers (to be released by Group in Jan

1998). In preparation, I have been grabbing everything I can get my

hands on that deals with communication, teaching and the

disciplemaking process. I so enjoyed Tony Jeary's new work I was

pleased that he allowed me to make this chapter available to you. I

was also pleased to discover that Tony is a committed Christian. I

think you will enjoy this chapter so much you will want to buy the

full book. You can purchase it online at www.amazon.com.

‑Josh Hunt

1. Know what you're talking about.

Thorough preparation equals total confidence. Prepare then rehearse,

rehearse, rehearse! Understand that your audience really wants you to

succeed. Practice meaningfully‑the way you'll actually deliver your

presentation. Refer to chapter 2 for the best techniques on

rehearsing.

2. Be yourself.

Use your own natural speaking style. Don't try to be someone you're

not.

3. Psyche yourself up‑use positive self‑talk.

Visualize success: picture your audience applauding you at the end of

your presentation then work toward it.

4. Work with your body's physical reaction to nerves.

Do stretching, isometrics, or some other exercise to relieve physical

nervousness. Take deep breaths to control breathing. Pausing: proper

pausing conveys relaxation and confidence.

5. Bond with your audience. Keep the audience on your side.

Pick two or three friendly faces; speak to them in your opening and

feed off their positive energy. Get a good night's sleep before your

presentation.

The Scene . . .

You know you have to lead a presentation at the quarterly sales

meeting next month and you know your material well‑your boss knows

that. But you're terrified of speaking in front of people. Or‑you've

prepared and rehearsed for your presentation on local safety issues to

be delivered to the local Commerce Committee until it seems like you

could deliver it in your sleep. Your 3‑D outline is as solid as

Plymouth Rock. You look great on your videotape. But as soon as you

stand up to rehearse in front of two or three of your friends, your

mind goes blank. You have to look at your rehearsal cards, which

confuses you even more, and before you know it, it's as if you never

even prepared. If you can't stay calm in front of three or four

friends, how will you ever manage to deliver your presentation in

front of a room full of strangers? Or‑in about one hour you have to

speak You've been reviewing your notes, avoiding coffee, and trying to

psyche yourself up for success. But you're so nervous that your hands

are shaking and your knees feel weak. If only there were something to

do to get it under control

The Solution . . .

Since there's more than one kind of nervousness (as the previous

scenes suggest), we need a system that addresses all the different

ways in which we feel nervous, a single system that addresses the

physical manifestations of nervousness‑butterflies in the stomach, dry

mouth, wet palms‑as well as the mental manifestations‑ negative

self‑talk, fear, and apprehension. In fact, an ideal solution would

take all that energy you're wasting on being nervous and funnel it

back into the presentation in the form of enthusiasm. You're Not Alone

There's good news and bad news about nervousness‑the good news is that

everyone feels it. The bad news is that everyone feels it. Or more

accurately, it never goes away. The differences between those who

appear to be free of nervousness and those who suffer the devastating

effects of obvious nervousness at the front of the room is control.

Every time you see someone who seems relaxed, confident, and natural

at the front of the room, it's because that person has mastered the

techniques of keeping her nervousness under control so well that

she'll never let you see her sweat!

Speaking in public is the number‑one fear of people in America‑ if you

can conquer this, it gives you a great competitive edge!

Step 1. Conquer Nervousness: Know What You're Talking About

The single best way to fight nerves is to prepare yourself. This is

because nervousness is rooted in psychological stress (fear of

failure) that manifests itself in physical symptoms (fast pulse,

shallow breathing, dry mouth, sweaty palms, sick stomach, strange

voice, and jittery knees). The bottom line is: preparation pays big

dividends. If you've prepared well and still feel nervous, your

preparation is going to help reduce your nerves once you begin to

talk. This section of the book and its tips deals with nerves at all

stages of the game‑a month before, the night before, or the hour

before your presentation. If you've followed the easy steps to

preparation and rehearsal outlined in chapters 1 and 2, you've

probably got a whole binder full of papers. The night before your

presentation, TAKE ACTION by reviewing these notes and running the

checklists you've prepared. This action will help reduce nerves.

Professional speaker David Peoples, author of Presentations Plus, has

this to say about reducing nervousness:

"The single most effective thing you can do for sweaty palms is

rehearse. The second most effective thing you can do for sweaty palms

is rehearse. Guess what the third most effective thing is?"

Step 2: Be Yourself

Don't even think about trying to be someone you're not. You might see

a great presenter a week before your presentation‑someone who has a

Don Rickles style of poking jokes at the audience, or someone who runs

back and forth and makes things up as she goes along. The audience may

love these folks and you might be tempted to imitate them. Take it

from me‑don't. Audiences see through pretense. You have enough to

worry about when you're giving a presentation‑don't add to your burden

by trying to do imitations. Here's just a partial list of what can go

wrong when you try to be someone else.

You can make a poor first impression and then have nowhere to fall

back.

Humor will be strained, because it is not natural‑not from your heart,

like all good humor. Unnatural humor ranges from dry and boring to

utterly disastrous.

Your eye contact will be weak because you'll be busy focusing on being

something you're not.

You will invariably lack conviction and enthusiasm.

The audience will resent your attempt or be embarrassed for you. All

of which is to say once more: Be yourself!

"What if my natural self is a nervous wreck?" you ask. Great

question! Proceed to step three and let's get to work fixing up that

nervous wreck.

Step 3: Psyche Yourself Up Effectively: Your Mind's Reaction

Everyone speaks to him or herself. It may or may not be in words‑but

in any case you give yourself messages and commands constantly. In

fact, we do it so often, we don't even think about it. This constant,

often wordless, dialogue we carry on with ourselves is known in the

presentation business as "self‑talk." All too often we let our

self‑talk become negative without realizing it. Often, it's the most

common of phrases. Some examples of this include:

"They're gonna hate me."

"I'll never get prepared in time."

"I'm just too nervous to stand up in front of those people."

"Last time I stood up in front of this group, I dropped all my

files‑what if it happens again?"

This negative self‑talk sends exactly the wrong message to

ourselves‑it psyches us out. Change this negative self‑talk! Try

something positive:

The audience is going to love me because they really want me to

succeed. (See sidebar on facing page.)

If I take a deep breath and concentrate, I will be more than prepared

on time.

Following the steps to reducing nerves in Inspire Any Audience: Proven

Secrets of the Pros will make me confident and competent in front of

ANY audience. All I have to do is be myself.

Last time I stood up in front of this group, I dropped my files‑but I

also got them laughing with me at the end of my presentation. I'll

focus on the positive outcome, not a negative incident.

If you can't help but think negatively, try this. Visualize failure

and then raving success. Which is more fun? A technique I've used to

calm my jitters is to put things into perspective. I "catastrophize"

and ask myself, "What's the worst possible thing that can happen?" In

the big scheme of things, the worst possible thing to happen during my

presentation probably isn't that terrible anyway. It is only a blip on

the radar scope of eternity. Think positively!

The Mind‑Body Connection

Self‑talk works for you (or against you) because of what nervousness

really is. What we call nervousness is really our body's natural

response to stressful situations. Scientists believe that these

feelings date back to our pre‑historic ancestors, who were

instinctively programmed for "fight or flight" when faced with stress

in the wild‑maybe in the form of a saber‑toothed tiger or a big brown

bear. Today, when we're faced with the unknown‑such as speaking in

front of a group of people we don't know‑that old mechanism kicks in

and our body gets prepared for fight or flight. Modern civilized life

doesn't leave us much room for fighting. As a result, we have nowhere

to turn to relieve this stress. Our ancestors could burn away this

stress by defending themselves or hightailing it out of there. But we

have to bottle it up and stand there. That internalized energy causes

all those unpleasant physical sensations we call nerves, platform

jitters, the shakes, and so on.

Step 4. Learn to Work with Your Body's Physical Reaction

Positive thinking won't make the symptoms of nervousness disappear

altogether, though it will greatly reduce your body's tendency to get

nervous. And sometimes, as I mentioned above, your body can be

treacherous. Even though you know better, even though you think

positively, your body insists on going through the motions of feeling

nervous. Unfortunately, the appearance of nervousness is often more

than enough to cause the reality of nervousness. Fortunately, once you

know a handful of "secret" techniques, dealing with nervousness is far

easier than you might imagine. The key to gaining control of your

body's reaction to the fight‑or‑flight instinct is to understand that

the symptoms of nervousness come from the tension of not being able to

burn off the fight‑or‑flight adrenaline. Burn off the excess energy,

relax, and you reduce the nerves.

Physical stress reducers:

Deep breathing

Isometric exercises

Vigorous exercises

Relaxation techniques

Yawning

Talking to yourself

Moving and gesturing

Pausing

Deep breathing helps control stress by returning our breathing to its

natural, pre‑stress patterns. Try taking a few deep breaths then

attempt to breathe normally over a period of a few minutes. Isometric

exercises are stationary exercises in which one group of muscles works

against another. Try pressing your fingertips gently together, then

press harder and hold for a few seconds. You can even do these as you

begin speaking‑no one will know that you're burning bottled stress and

reducing nervousness. Vigorous exercises such as jogging, walking, or

swimming help keep stress low. A night or two before your

presentation, take time out to go for a walk. If you're still nervous

just before your presentation, find a storage room or empty rest room

and do a few vigorous jumping jacks. Don't drench yourself in sweat,

just do enough to get the blood flowing. It's a great stress reducer.

Relaxation techniques: Relax by focusing on tense muscle groups. First

relax your scalp, then your eyebrows and ears, then your tongue and

jaw, then shoulders and on down to your feet. Repeat as necessary or

try stretching in combination with this technique. Yawning is the

natural way to relax. Try yawning widely a few times. It's the body's

natural way of relaxing itself. It also stretches the muscles of your

neck and throat to make for more natural speaking. Talking to

yourself: This is different from self‑talking. Here I mean literally

talk to yourself to warm up your voice. One trick: practice saying

"Good morning!" over and over as you're on your way to a presentation.

People may look at you as if you're nuts, but it's a small price to

pay to reduce nerves and get yourself prepared for a great

presentation!

Moving and gesturing: As you begin to speak, move, gesture, and burn

some nervous energy. It catches your audience's attention when you're

animated.

Pausing: Once you begin speaking, nerves can make you speak quickly,

alerting everyone to your nervous state. Control it by learning to

pause. Proper pausing conveys relaxation and confidence. An audience

will sit up and listen when you pause. Surprisingly a pause of two,

three, or even more seconds not only catches the attention of the

audience, it lets them know you're in command. Learn to use the power

of silence! Practice one or more of these techniques regularly and

learn how to tailor them to your own particular patterns of

nervousness. Combined with positive self‑talk they represent a

powerful combination for combating nervousness.

Step 5: Bonding with the Audience

Don't be too concerned if you still have a touch of nervous energy

left as you approach the front of the room. It's useful energy at this

point‑in fact, it's something you can use to build excitement, project

enthusiasm, and create a bond with the audience. Building an early

rapport helps boost

your confidence and increases the audience's natural urge to want you

to succeed. Bonding with your audience begins long before you start to

speak.

Arrive early‑before any audience members do. This sends the message

that you care enough to get things ready in advance.

Meet and greet the audience yourself‑I never cease to be amazed at

presenters who stand off in one corner or officiously read notes while

their audience files in. Get on your feet and greet! This gives you a

great opportunity to build rapport by meeting audience members as

individuals.

Always ask for their names, shake their hands, and make solid eye

contact. When there's time, finding out how far they drove to get to

the presentation, where they work, and other personal information

provides you with important material and begins the process of

developing audience advocates.

Start off by grabbing your audience's attention‑(See chapter 4, "The

First Three Minutes," for details.) Get your audience involved

immediately! This will make them buy‑in to what you say for the rest

of your presentation.

Let your audience know what's in it for them‑Begin with a statement

that reduces their nervousness. (Yes, your audience is nervous, like

you‑everyone is!) Let them know they aren't wasting their time.

Make eye contact‑Search out a few friendly faces‑those folks who are

smiling, nodding at what you say, laughing at your jokes. Look them in

the eye and draw power from them. A good place to start are those few

brave souls who sat in the front seats.

Show genuine enthusiasm‑Let them know you're happy to be there, and

they will be too. This will reduce your nervousness and make you

comfortable. You probably didn't know all or even most of this

information beforehand. Chances are no one told you that learning

these things can make a friend of your audience. Getting that

information beforehand greatly increases your success rate and

confidence, thereby reducing or even eliminating your nervousness. You

might have heard how important it is to "build a rapport" with your

audience‑that is, getting them to know and like you. But has anyone

ever told you that building a rapport with your audience begins BEFORE

you ever see them? The research you do even just a day or two before

you meet your audience can make a big difference. They will begin to

know and like you at the beginning of the talk if you have begun to

know (and like) them BEFORE the talk.

One More Note on Nerves

Nervousness doesn't have to be your enemy. It's a natural and healthy

sign. The day I stop feeling nervous is the day I know I'm no longer

an effective presenter. The trick to nerves is making them work for

you and not against you. Always strive to appear poised. It's one of

the few miracles of the real world. The more you practice not looking

nervous, the more you become less nervous. And finally, never

apologize to your audience for feeling nervous. Your audience has no

idea you're feeling the jitters. Only you can let them know, so don't!

Very Important Points to Remember

Everyone gets nervous‑it's a natural physical reaction that can be

controlled, both mentally and physically.

Your audience really wants you to win.

Being completely prepared is the key to reducing nervousness.

Use positive self‑talk to reduce your mental stress.

Use appropriate stress and tension reduction exercises to lessen your

physical stress.

Convert nervousness to enthusiasm by bonding with your audience. Get

them immediately involved.

Practice feeling confident and you will be confident. Never let 'em

see you sweat!

http://www.joshhunt.com/nervous.html

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Preaching - Good Questions - 4/2001.101

Sunday School Bible Study Sunday School Bible Study Sunday School

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School Bible Study

Philosophy Behind Good Question Sunday School Lessons

by Josh Hunt

My most life changing experiences have been engaging conversations.

When I look back over the topography of my life, many of the peaks

have been spiritually and intellectually stimulating moments of

dialogue.

The purpose of Good Question is to create these moments in the

classroom each week. My goal is to help you create moments for your

students. Moments that come and go but leave footprints. Footprints

that forever mark the learner. Moments about which students will later

say, "I remember one time we were talking in Sunday School and. . ."

The learner is forever touched by that moment. Moments like that last

forever‑‑moments where the Spirit of God is forever present. It is in

these moments that disciples are made.

The goal of Christian teaching is to make disciples‑‑men and women,

boys and girls who love God with all their heart, soul, mind and

strength. People who are putting relationships together. People of

faith and prayer. People of character. People of passion for God.

People who "know, love and follow Christ."(1)

The test of the teacher is the life of the student. Paul told the

Corinthians that they were, "a letter from Christ, the result of our

ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,

not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." (II

Corinthians 3:3) The test is not the preparation or the level of

knowledge of the teacher or even the quality of the lesson. The test

is the life. The bottom line is not creating great lessons; it is

creating great lives.

As you teach these lessons keep this focus in mind. Your goal is not

to cover the material or to ask every question. Resist the compulsion

to ask every question. This is a cafeteria style approach. Choose what

works for you. Choose those questions that will help you create

disciples in your group. Let the conversation flow freely. It is in

these moments disciples are made. Avoid allowing the conversation to

drift aimlessly. It is your responsibility to guide the conversation

according to the teaching aim for the day and the needs of the

students. The greater priority, of course, is the needs of the

students.

Do not try to teach too much. We often teach so little because we try

to teach so much. One simple truth, pounded deeply into the hearts and

minds of the students, is a formidable task and a worthy

accomplishment. You will notice that in this book, every question that

could be asked is not asked. Every verse is not studied. Another 4,000

good questions could be written. I have isolated one or two main

themes per chapter and centered the questions around these.

Preparation

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The best lessons are prepared like good chili: slow cooked over a long

period of time. My great fear in preparing this volume is that lesson

preparation may become so easy that teachers fail to prepare

themselves. If you think you have in this volume a ready made lesson,

you will be disappointed. Lessons cannot make disciples; people do.

You can take one of these lessons and walk into class with virtually

no preparation whatsoever and present a reasonably good lesson.

However in doing so, you will not make disciples. You will only

present good lessons. There is a difference.

I invite you to begin reading both the text and the questions early in

the week. Read them slowly. Let the stories fill your imagination.

Feel what the original writer felt. Live with the text. Bombard the

text with questions of your own‑‑thousands of questions. Thinking

teachers create thinking disciples. The role of the teacher is not to

present all the answers. It is to engage the mind of the student. Do

not be too quick to give answers. Let the students struggle. Do not

let them drown; do let them imagine they might. This is the stuff of

discipleship.

Pay special attention to the "Jump Ball Question." This is the heart

of the lesson. Let me explain. There is more than one way of looking

at most everything in Christianity. The jump ball question could be

answered legitimately in more ways than one. The tension that exists

when differing opinions occur is what creates stimulating dialogue. As

these opinions are expressed, a conversation will develop among the

people in the group. Contrast this group interaction with a simple

dialogue between the teacher and individual members. If you, the

teacher, do not understand the tension in the jump ball question, a

simple answer may be assumed and the whole lesson will go flat.

Here is an example of a jump ball question:

Is Christianity easy or hard?

A well‑educated disciple will see that, on one hand, Christianity is

easy and, on the other hand, Christianity is hard. Jesus said, "For my

yoke is easy and my burden is light." ( - Matthew

11:30 - Matthew 11:30}). "Then he said to them, 'If anyone would come

after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow

me.'" ( - Luke 9:23 - Luke 9:23}) In a way Christianity is

easy, and in a way Christianity is hard. Of course, it would be easy

enough for a teacher to simply tell this to a group. However, I have

experienced that it is far better to lead a group discover this on

their own‑‑in the context of mind‑bending discussion. Discovered truth

is remembered truth.

Many times, the group will all jump to one side of the jump ball

issue. In this case, the teacher needs to jump on the other side‑‑but

not too strongly, lest he persuade the whole group too quickly. The

goal is to create an engaging conversation, not to mindlessly

persuade.

For example, if you were to ask the question, "Is Christianity easy or

hard?" you might get the simple answer, "It is hard." To which I would

immediately respond, "Then why did Jesus say, 'My yoke is easy and my

burden is light.?'" Immediately the mind switches on: "How can that

be? It always seems hard to me. What is it that I don't understand?

What is it that is missing?" Sit back and watch as the piranhas go

after the meat. This is the climate in which disciples are made. Let

the group grapple with the jump ball question.

You might ask the question, "Is Christianity easy or hard?" and hear

the answer, "Easy." In this case, push the jump ball back to the

center by asking, "Why did Jesus say, 'Children, how hard it is to

enter the kingdom of God!'?" ( - Mark 10:24 - Mark 10:24}).

After the group has wrestled with the issue, summarize by saying

something like, "In a way Christianity is easy and in a way it is

difficult. If Christianity is a day‑to‑day struggle, you are probably

losing. There is a certain grace and flow to living the Christian life

that is easy. When you are walking in the spirit, the fruit of the

spirit naturally flows out. On the other hand, if discipleship is not

the most demanding thing you have ever encountered, there is a good

chance you have missed it. . ."

As you prepare, make sure you understand the tension built into the

jump ball question so that you can direct the question into an

engaging conversation and summarize the truth on both sides.

Types of questions

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Several types of questions are employed. Each has a specific purpose:

Life exposure question. These are somewhat bizarre, off‑the‑wall,

ice‑breaker questions. Their purpose is to get the group talking and

to build fellowship. They are loosely related to the text. Don't spend

too much time on these, but you will find them helpful in getting the

group going.

"What does the text say" question. You have to know what the text says

before you can know what it means and know how to apply it to your

life. Do not assume that the group knows what the Bible says. Get the

truth in front of them. This should not take long, but is an important

foundation for the rest of the discussion. Often, very simple question

can be used to draw out quiet members of the group. You might ask,

"Silent Sally, how did God demonstrate his love for us according to

- Romans 5:8 - Romans 5:8}." This simple question will build

Sally's confidence and make it easier for her to answer more difficult

questions. One other hint: make sure Silent Sally can answer the

question. Otherwise, the last state will be worse than the first.

These simple questions should not take a lot of time. They quickly set

the stage for what is to follow.

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN? QUESTION These are the bread and butter

questions. Examples include:

What does the word redemption mean?

What does it mean to be a fisher of men?

HOW DID THEY FEEL? QUESTION These questions help the group to get into

the passage in a personal way. An example is, "How do you think the

prodigal son's father felt when he first saw his son?"

REAL LIFE QUESTION Instead of talking about the text, these questions

expose life. Suppose you are doing a study on I Peter 5:7 "Cast all

your anxiety on him because he cares for you." You might ask, "Can you

tell the group about a time when you were able to cast all your cares

upon God? What happened?"

JUMP BALL QUESTION This is the heart of the lesson. Pay special

attention to the tension in the question. There is more than one way

of looking at things. See discussion above.

APPLICATION QUESTION The key to life change is application. The keys

to good application are:

Simplicity. The more simple the application, the greater the chance

they will do something about it. Don't ask them to memorize 50 verses.

Ask for one.

Specific. Don't ask how they will do better in general. Ask for one

specific act.

Time. Ask what they will do this week, today, now. Applications

without a deadline are only good ideas.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION These can only be used in a limited way in

open groups. (Open groups are groups like Sunday School classes where

people can enter at any time.) Keep the accountability of short time

duration. Ask how they applied last week's lesson; don't ask them how

they are doing on the six month plan the group is following.

The Big Idea

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Each chapter centers around one or two big ideas. This volume makes no

attempt to cover every idea in every chapter. On the contrary, I have

selected one or two themes from each chapter and built the lesson

around these. Often, we teach so little because we try to teach too

much. If you are looking for questions related to a particular verse,

you may be disappointed as I may have skipped over that verse

altogether. Space limitations simply would not allow this to be an

exhaustive treatment of every verse in the New Testament.

Closing Challenge

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I love small groups. I love the laughter. I love the friendship. I

love the unpredictable, off‑the‑wall comments that people make; that

is part of learning. I love the mind‑boggling confusion that sometimes

arises from a good jump‑ball question. I love the clarity of truth

that often results. I love the smiles. I love the tears. I love the

reality. I love the life change. Most of all, I love to see lives

change.

This web page is dedicated to you, the small group leader who will

change lives through your small group. My life is richer because of

people like you. My prayer is that your teaching will be richer for

the use of this volume.

1. Schultz, Thom and Joani, Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at

Church: and How to Fix It.

http://www.joshhunt.com/teaching.html

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Good Question!

Why Asking Questions is the Best Way to Teach

by Josh Hunt

May I confess my sin to you? I am far more interested in what I have

to say than what you have to say. I think this is true of most people.

We are all interested in ourselves and what we have to say, but we

wonder if anyone else is interested in us and our ideas. We wonder if

anyone cares. This is one reason why asking questions is one of the

best ways to teach.

It is difficult not to pay attention when you are talking. It is easy

to dose off when someone else is talking‑‑ even if that person is

pretty interesting. This is another reason why asking questions is the

best way to teach adults. If you would become a half‑way decent

teacher, make lavish use of questions as a teaching method.

I believe in questions so much that I write 25‑ 30 questions for my

teachers each week. These are now available on my home page on the

World Wide Web. One of my life goals is to have the questions written

on the whole Bible. Using questions accomplish at least three things.

1. Questions involve the group.

Where there is no involvement, there is no disciple making. Where

there is no involvement, there is no change. Where there is no

involvement, there is no education.

Let me be clear, you can involve the group without asking questions.

You can involve people in lecture and story telling and various other

methods. They might listen. But they are nearly guaranteed to listen

to themselves. It is hard to daydream when you are talking. So why

take a chance? If people are listening and not talking, they may or

may not be involved. If they are talking, it is not likely that they

are secretly dozing off. This is why it is a worthy goal to allow each

one in your group say something of significance to them every week.

2. Questions build relationships

Small groups have several purposes. One purpose is to make people

smarter. People who attend over several years should learn something

about the Bible. There is no virtue in ignorance. My personal goal is

that anyone who sits under my teaching for two years or more would be

able to tell the story of the Bible in a five minute overview. I try

to teach content.

A second purpose has to do with ethics. People should be challenged to

live better lives. They should be challenged to pursue love, faith,

and holiness. This is a second important purpose of groups.

Another equally important purpose is that they should be building

relationships. This is the formation of a little platoon. We should

form relationships in class that continue all through the week.

If the only purposes were to become smarter and live better, we could

get video tapes that would do a far better job of lecturing than you

or I could do. We cannot compete with the people who are available on

video tape today. But video tapes do not form relationships. In

addition, the discussion provided by good questions not only let you

know the group better, they let the group know the group better. This

is hard to take, but the truth is that most adults do not attend

Sunday school because they have a burning desire to know more.(1) They

would like to learn; they also want to meet some friends. We live on a

lonely planet.

And what better place to meet friends than in a small group? Where

would you have them go to meet friends, if not at church?

Groups that double every two years or less tend to be relationally

tight. One of the best ways to build relationships is to ask lots of

questions.

3. Questions help you to discover what they still need to learn

We don't normally give tests in our groups. But we still need to know

what the people know and don't know. If you are presenting half‑way

decent lessons, your people already know quite a bit. But you won't

know what they know without asking questions. Asking questions allows

you to discover the level of knowledge and maturity of the group.

I follow several principles that relate to this: "never attend a

conference you could have taught," and "never read a book you could

have written." In the same way, don't make your people attend a class

they could have taught. If you want to double your class every two

years or less, you won't do it by going over the same old pool of

knowledge. By asking lots of questions, and carefully listening to

people's answers, you will soon learn what areas need further

emphasis.

One of the best ways to become a halfway decent teacher is to ask lots

of questions.

1. Dick Murray, Strengthening the Adult Sunday school Class, p. 26,

Creative Leadership Series, Lyle Schaller, Editor, Abingdon.

http://www.joshhunt.com/goodart.html

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Preaching and the retelling of stories

"The stories we hear, the stories we tell" by Richard Frazier.

Quarterly Review, Fall 1999 (Vol 19, No 3). Pages 184‑197. Topic:

storytelling. See also Oct99‑6a. Topic: STORYTELLING

Most preachers use stories in their sermons. They appear as anecdotes,

attention‑getters, or illustrations. They are hung on the sermonic

tree like Christmas lights offering something beautiful to look at,

but not necessarily providing much light.

Too many stories are sentimental, shallow, moralizing and

unsatisfying. Good stories, on the other hand, raise questions,

address the complexities of life, invite exploration, and offer

surprise. Robert Coles says that the great storytellers use stories to

hold up a mirror to reveal hypocrisy and the shallowness of society.

They also depict real people struggling with their own conflicts.

Sometimes these stories are open‑ended, refusing to offer an easy

answer. Frequently they address the main themes of the sermon. They

may do so using a variety of literary forms, including metaphor,

aphorisms and proverbs, parables, parallelism, and dialectic.

The parable is one of the most popular forms of storytelling,

perhaps because Jesus used it so frequently. A parable, called by some

an extended metaphor, is invitational and subversive. That is, it is a

story that invites the listener to participate, that engages the

listener with his or her own experience, an experience of a world that

is familiar. But it is subversive in that the story then shifts to a

different world which functions with an alien set of principles. In

parables, things are not always as the appear.

The preacher can improve his preaching by sharpening his ability

to see a parable as it occurs in literature, film, or even the

everyday happenings of life. The story doesn't need to have a strand

of piety to it; it is better if it doesn't.

We are taught to preach in a way that people have something

concrete to take home with them. It would be better if we preached in

a way that people had something abstract to take home with them. You

can't do much with the concrete, but with images there is a lot of

flex room. They will continue to work in the mind and heart of the

audience long after the benediction has been pronounced.

Therefore, the preacher is well‑advised to pay attention to the

form of the story as well as its content. One might start by asking a

series of questions about the stories in the sermon: What will my

audience hear? Is the story open‑ended so that it invites discussion?

Will my audience relate to the characters or the situation? What is

the tension in this story? What are the metaphors? Does it work with

surprise or irony? In what way is it subversive? Does it leave a

visual image? Can God use this story and my telling of it?

http://www.navpress.com/ctt/view\_article.asp?articleID=15180&tbvw=SEC&S

ectionID=Ministry

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March 2000

Article Summary

Section: Ministry

How to knock your (sermon) block off

"Breaking through sermon block" by Merle Mees. Proclaim!, Wint 2000.

Page 20. Topic: sermon preparation. See also Feb00‑15b, Feb00‑15a.

Topic: SERMON PREPARATION

It's a preacher's worst nightmare: Sunday's coming, and you don't have

a clue for a sermon. It's a common problem for creative people, and

pastors are no exception. Sermon block need not be a permanent

condition, however. Here are some techniques which might help you get

off your block.

Go somewhere else. If you can't think in your office, then grab

your laptop, and go to a local restaurant or the library. Often just a

change of scenery will get your juices going.

Change your approach. As a preacher, you're a creature of habit.

You have a typical method of sermon preparation that usually works for

you. When it isn't working, however, change the routine. Don't start

with the text; start with context. Do some general reading. Something

will come to mind.

Adjust the schedule. If you have set aside the morning for

writing and study but nothing is happening, give it up. Make phone

calls, and clear out other responsibilities you were going to do

later. Then come back to it.

Get in the mood. Put on a favorite CD, or spend sometime in the

chapel in prayer. Take a walk. Putting on a mood change will help you

get into the Spirit.

Sermon block can be the result of pressure. Perhaps you have too

much going on, and it's time to clear off the plate. Doing so could

sharpen your creative edge and give some space for God to break

through!

http://www.navpress.com/ctt/view\_article.asp?articleID=15182&tbvw=SEC&S

ectionID=Ministry

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Why Nobody Learns Much - 4/2001.101

Why Nobody Learns Much 1

Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything At Church: and How to Fix It

Chapter 5: MAKE PEOPLE THINK

by Thom and Joani Schultz

Home Page Articles Email Resume Support

Note: the full copy of this excellent book is published by Group

Publishers and is available at your bookstore. One online source is

www.amazon.com

Today's students have been trained not to think. They aren't dumber

than previous generations. We've simply conditioned them not to use

their heads.

You may have heard this old Sunday school story:

TEACHER: All right, boys and girls, what's fuzzy, has a bushy tail and

gathers nuts in the fall?

JOHNNY: Sure sounds like a squirrel to me but I know the answer must

be Jesus.

You see, we've trained Johnny and his classmates to respond with the

simplistic answers they think the teacher wants to hear.

Fill‑in‑the‑blank student workbooks and teachers who ask dead‑end

questions such as "What's the capitol of Delaware?" have produced

kids‑and adults‑who've learned not to think. We've programmed kids to

look for snappy black‑and‑white answers that teachers want.

Researchers recently probed a group of second‑graders in Birmingham,

Alabama. These kids had just scored well above average on a statewide

standardized math test. Now the researchers gave them this problem:

There are 26 sheep and 10 goats on a ship. How old is the captain?

Ninety percent of the children gave the same answer: 36.1

We've withered kids' thinking and doused their common sense. What's

more, we've chilled their creativity. They're programmed to repeat

what the workbook or teacher has prescribed. There's no room in this

system to think "out of the box." Just say what the teacher wants to

hear and forget about it.

Look at this typical problem from a child's reader:

The tightrope walker \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the tightrope.

a. balanced

b. baked

c. bubbled

d. barked

Students who check b, c or d fail the question. But why should they

fail? Think about those responses in b, c and d. They conjure up far

more creative thoughts than the response the teacher wanted. But no.

The student is reprimanded for thinking, for being creative.

THE LAND OF THE R‑BBIT

Our children are schooled very early not to think. Teachers attempt to

help kids read with nonsensical fill‑in‑the‑blank drills, word

scrambles and missing‑letter puzzles. Educator Frank Smith calls these

exercises "r‑bbits." He coined the term (pronounced "are‑bit") after

attending the International Reading Association convention. A computer

program was displayed that "helps kids read." The computer asked: "Can

you fill in the missing letter in r‑bbit?"

Smith says, "The r‑bbit teaches children nothing about the way people

employ spoken or written language. Filling in blanks is not the way

anyone uses language, spoken or written. No one ever says to a child,

'Put on your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we'll go to the game as soon as you guess

the missing word.' The r‑bbit is irrelevant and misleading."2

Sadly, the Christian world has followed secular education into this

folly. Most Christian curricula consist of wall‑to‑wall r‑bbits. Look

at some actual examples from well‑known denominational and independent

Christian publishers:

Write these words in the correct spaces:

forgive confess sins

If we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God, God will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us our

sins. - 1 John 1:9 - 1 John 1:9

\* \* \* \* \*

Read the Bible verses and unscramble the words to answer the questions

about trusting God:

- Isaiah 40:28‑29 - Isaiah 40:28‑29}: What will God give those

who are weak and tired?

W E R P O \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and G S T T H E R N \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

Remove the Ds, Ps and Ks:

K P C H R I S T I A N S D B E G A N P D T O K M E E T K

I N D T H E P C A T A C O M B S D P K K P K D D P K K P D P K

The writers of this material obscure God's word; they intentionally

hide the truth. This is what consumes our children's time in church.

And we wonder why they don't understand even the most basic tenets of

our faith?

Puzzles, scrambles, fill‑in‑the‑blanks and encoded messages do not

promote thinking. They confuse and consternate. Through this type of

meaningless busywork our students will not grow closer to God. They

may, however, grow closer to winning a spot on "Wheel of Fortune."

THE THINKING CHURCH

Some church leaders aren't altogether sure they want their people to

think. They figure they've already done the thinking for their people.

All their followers need to do is obey them. Without question.

But research shows that churches that encourage thinking produce more

Christians with mature faith. However those churches are in the

minority. Only 46 percent of church‑going adults say their church

challenges their thinking. Only 42 percent of teenagers say their

thinking is challenged in church. 3 And only 35 percent of fifth‑ and

sixth‑graders say their church classes make them think.4

Learning is a consequence of thinking. If our people aren't thinking,

they're not growing in their faith. Christian educator Howard

Hendricks says the average church attendee" is not excited by the

truth‑he's embalmed by it. The educational program in the churches is

often an insult to people's intelligence. We're giving them wilted cut

flowers instead of teaching them how to grow by means of God's word,

which is alive!"5

PEOPLE WANT ANSWERS

"Today's people want answers. And here at First Church, we give them

the answers."

Some churches advertise this almost boastful, arrogant attitude. The

message seems to be: "Ours is a black‑and‑white world. Come to our

church with your questions, and we'll quickly dispense all the right

answers and send you on your way."

Well, people today are seeking answers. But most aren't looking for

quick and easy answers dispensed to them by authority figures. They

want to find answers. They're weary of "just do it because I said so."

Search Institute's Christian education study found that young people

said "teaching how to make moral decisions" is a chief responsibility

of the church. Notice they did not ask for a list of the right

decisions. They want us to teach them the skills to make their own

good Christian decisions.

Our people don't need to be told what to think. But they desperately

need to learn how to think in a Christian context.

Telling people what to think programs them to be susceptible to

unhealthy influences around them. The church often warns teenagers of

the dangers of peer pressure. But what is peer pressure? It's the act

of basing one's behavior on the influence of outside voices. It's the

preclusion of thinking for one's self. The more we tell people what to

think, the less they rely on their own thinking processes. The most

authoritarian churches, the most authoritarian parents, produce the

most peer‑pressure prone people.

We help our people grow not by giving them all the answers, but by

helping them learn to think on their own. When they learn the process

of finding God's direction in their lives, their learning becomes

portable. They're able to learn and grow even when we teachers aren't

around.

In Japan, where education has been shown to be more effective,

students learn to think. As early as the first grade, Japanese

students are given up to a week to solve arithmetic problems. They're

encouraged to work together and critique each other's approaches.

Teachers deliberately avoid supplying the answers. The kids learn. And

they learn to think.

"Too much 'teacher talk' gets in the way

of higher‑level reasoning

because it prevents children from doing their own thinking."

Jane Healy, Endangered Minds 6

JESUS THE ASKER

Jesus, the master teacher, displayed a determination to make his

learners think for themselves. Even to this day followers contemplate

and ponder Jesus' teachings. That's exactly how he planned it.

Jesus often refused to give a direct answer to a direct question. A

lawyer once asked him, "Who is my neighbor?" Instead of supplying a

direct answer, Jesus launched into a story about a Samaritan

( - Luke 10:29‑37 - Luke 10:29‑37}).

He used parables to make people think. And only rarely did he tell his

listeners the meaning of his stories. He wanted them to think. And

even today the mental wrestling we do helps us wring rich messages

from Jesus' parables. And we grow more because we're engaged in the

thinking process.

Many contemporary preachers also use parables. They call them sermon

illustrations. But few preachers exhibit the faith in their listeners

that Jesus did. Instead of telling their stories and sitting down,

they usually go on to explain their stories. Their conviction of their

flock's inability to think is a self‑fulfilling prophecy. So long as

Rev. Smith always explains his illustrations, no need to think. Might

as well click off the old brain.

Jesus, on the other hand, believed in his listeners' ability to think,

and he trusted the Holy Spirit to nudge their thinking. Jesus knew

that once you plant a seed, you can trust God and the soil to do the

rest.

"I planted the seed,

and Apollos watered it.

But God is the One who made it grow."

- 1 Corinthians 3:6 - 1 Corinthians 3:6

Jesus also demonstrated his commitment to thinking by the number of

questions he asked. We went through the gospels and highlighted every

question Jesus asked. Those books are now a patchwork of yellow

highlighter markings. Scores and scores of questions.

Often when people approached Jesus with a question he responded with a

query of his own. One day in the temple, the priests and elders asked

Jesus, "What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you

this authority?"

Jesus said, "I also will ask you a question. If you answer me, then I

will tell you what authority I have to do these things. Tell me: When

John baptized people, did that come from God or just from other

people?" ( - Matthew 21:23‑25 - Matthew 21:23‑25}). Those men

were forced to think.

You see, Jesus didn't come to settle minds, but to jolt them. He

didn't come to make us more comfortable, but to stir our thoughts, to

help us learn, to make us think.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

So, we observe that Jesus was an asker. Step into any secular or

church class and you'll find the teacher asking questions there too.

What's the difference? There's a big difference.

Most teachers ask the wrong questions. We visited a typical first

grade Sunday school class and observed the teacher question her kids

about Jesus' birth. She spent a significant portion of class time on

this question: "Where was Jesus born?" Some of the kids eagerly thrust

up their hands. "In heaven," said one. "In a hospital," said another.

A little girl said, "On the earth."

The teacher said, "Yes, but where on the earth?"

"In Jerusalem?" inquired one child.

"No," said the teacher." It was in Bethlehem. But where in Bethlehem?"

The questioning continued like this for several more minutes. The

teacher had in mind a specific answer she wanted. The kids grew weary

of her grilling and lost confidence in their ability to read the

teacher's mind.

Finally, with a bit of desperation, the teacher tried to break the

stalemate with a clue: "Jesus was born in a m‑m‑m‑m‑m‑mmmmmm." The

kids still didn't get it. The other teacher in the room finally jumped

in and said, "He was born in a manger. As usual we're running out of

time."

That's the kind of questioning that wastes time and chills thinking.

Most of the class sits with dulled minds while one or two students try

to reward the teacher with a factoid. That style of asking dominates

the time in our churches and schools. One study found that fewer than

one percent of teachers' questions illicit more than a factual answer

or routine procedure.7

Asking students to recite facts from the Bible or elsewhere exercises

just their memory, not their understanding. Even the scribes and the

Pharisees knew the facts.

Instead of looking for a response such as m‑m‑m‑m‑m‑manger, why not

try a thinking question? "Jesus was born in the cold where the animals

were kept. What do you suppose that was like for him and his mother?"

Each individual in the class can answer that question. Each is

required to think, to contemplate the humble way in which Jesus came

to Earth.

Do you see the difference in goals between the two questions about

Jesus' birth? The m‑m‑m‑m‑m‑manger question sought a single student

who might know that one‑word answer, like in a TV game show. The "what

do you suppose" question sought to make each child think, to imagine,

to identify with Jesus.

Jesus didn't question his listeners in order to warehouse facts. He

questioned them to make them think. Look at a few of his examples from

the book of Matthew:

And why do you worry about clothes? ( 6:28)

Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend's eye, but

you don't notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? (7:3)

Which is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven, or to tell him,

"Stand up and walk"? (9:5)

Why did you doubt? (14:31)

What do you think about the Christ? (22:42)

Christian educator and author Dorothy Jean Furnish said, "Avoid

questions that require predetermined answers. This practice results

eventually in hypocrisy on the part of children because they tell us

what they think we want to hear."8

http://www.joshhunt.com/whynob.html

See #2

Why Nobody Learns Much 2

ENCOURAGING THINKING

Helping our people think requires a paradigm shift in how we teach. We

need to plan for higher‑order thinking, set aside time for it and be

willing to reduce our time spent on lower‑order parroting, r‑bbits and

the like.

Thinking classrooms look quite different from traditional classrooms.

In most of our church non‑thinking environments, the teacher does most

of the talking in hopes that knowledge will somehow transmit from his

or her brain to the students. In thinking settings, the teacher

coaches students to ponder, wonder, imagine and problem‑solve.

Let's examine five strategies you can implement right away that will

encourage thinking in your church.

1. Ask open‑ended questions

"Where was Jesus born?" is a closed‑ended question. This type of

question is associated with lower‑order thinking‑memory and recall of

facts. There's typically only one right answer to a closed‑ended

question. A student either knows the answer or not. And if he or she

answers, the rest of the class will be uninvolved.

Open‑ended questions require more than simplistic answers. They

require students to think. And all students can be involved in the

process. Thought‑provoking open‑ended questions invite all to think,

to listen to others' responses, and to contribute their own ideas.

Open‑ended questions cause people to use the content they've learned.

Some examples of open‑ended questions:

Why did you think God allowed Jesus, his only son, to be born in a

stable?

If Jesus were born today, what kind of place would God choose for

Jesus' birth?

If today, an unwed teenage girl gave birth to a boy in an alley, what

would it take for you or anybody to believe he was the Messiah, the

Son of God?

2. Ask follow‑up questions

Today's learners are conditioned to give pat answers‑without thinking.

But as teacher‑coaches we don't have to settle for snap, no‑brain

responses. We can encourage thinking by asking follow‑up questions.

Some examples:

What do you mean by . . . ?

What reasons do you have?

How did you decide . . . ?

Tell me more.

Now, guess what you're likely to hear from time to time? "I don't

know." This terribly common response is the battle cry of a generation

that's been taught not to think. But, again, we don't have to settle

for it. We can ask an extension question to "I don't know." Some

samples from the book Creating the Thoughtful Classroom:

Ask me a question that will help you understand.

If you did know, what would you say?

Pretend you do know‑make something up. 9

3. Wait for students' answers

Today's teachers dread silence after they've asked a question. In

fact, the average teacher waits only about one second before

panicking. Then the teacher typically gives away an answer, rephrases

the question or scolds the students.

But thinking takes time. If we ask a good question we need to allow

the time necessary for thinking to germinate. The minimum is five to

10 seconds.

We can make think time work by following some simple guidelines:

Tell your class or group what think time is, and why you use it. It's

no deep, dark teacher secret. You and your students will be more

comfortable with silence if everyone knows its purpose.

Sometimes ask students to write their responses first. Then ask them

to share. This encourages everyone's participation‑and soaks up the

silence with active thinking.

Wait until most students have thought of a response before listening

to anyone. Always calling on Howie Handraiser shuts down thinking

among the rest of the group. Use think time to allow everyone to

devise a response.

4. Don't evaluate students' discussion responses

This is the toughest guideline for us church folks. We naturally want

to affirm everyone. And we do that habitually in teaching situations.

We love to say, "Good answer!" "Right!" and "Great!"

But think about it. What do those responses do to the rest of the

class or group? They telegraph that the right answer has already been

given‑time to shut down the brain. Smarty Pants has already done the

thinking and won the teacher's approval.

The authors of Creating the Thoughtful Classroom write: "Art Costa is

a strong proponent of teaching without opinions, and he once

demonstrated how the power of opinions can shut down thinking. He

began a mock discussion and solicited ideas from his adult audience.

Several responses later, he said 'good!' to an idea put forth. Within

an instant, I could watch myself mentally shut down. I knew the person

was 'right' and had given the answer he was looking for, and I didn't

need to think any longer. Your students will do the same thing (and do

already, all the time) if you selectively comment on students

responses."10

We must recognize that teacher reinforcement is powerful. We must use

it wisely.

So how can we respond? We can use non‑judgmental responses such as

"okay," "thank you" and "uh‑huh." These responses acknowledge that

students have been heard, without passing judgment, and without

chilling thinking among the other students.

We can also reserve our opinion until the end of the discussion. After

everyone has shared‑and engaged their brains‑we can help illuminate

the subject with our thoughts or with an insight from God's Word. In

this way students aren't encouraged to let the teacher do all the

thinking.

But what if a student makes a theologically or morally absurd

statement? How do we handle that non‑judgmentally? At this point we

can jump in with follow‑up questions that may help the student and the

class see the absurdity. We can also ask others to give their opinion.

These techniques can help students discover the truth and flex their

brains.

5. Encourage students' questions

As we've seen, thinking percolates when teachers ask good questions.

But a sure sign that thinking goes into four‑wheel drive is when

students begin to ask the questions.

And faith grows when people feel free to ask questions about God.

Search Institute found that a church's "thinking climate" grows when

members are encouraged to ask questions. However, most churches don't

do too well in this department. Only 40 percent of adults and 45

percent of teenagers say their church encourages them to ask

questions. 11

When people become askers they become learners. They become thinkers.

We need to do a better job of inviting questions. And when those

questions come we must resist the temptation to provide instant, pat

answers. We must turn back the myth that our students will lose all

respect for us if we sometimes answer their tough questions with "I

don't know."

We must allow our people time to think, to wrestle with the issues. As

Jesus often did.

And we can create a better thinking climate by encouraging students to

ask one another questions. Let them forget we're the teachers for a

while. Let them be the askers.

Educator and author Jane Healy said, "The teacher has to be able to

stop dispensing information long enough to listen to the children,

listen and encourage the children's questions."

THINKING IS ALIEN

Implementing these thinking strategies may not go smoothly at first.

We're talking a new language here. Higher‑order thinking is a new idea

in the schools and in the church. Neither our kids nor our adults are

accustomed to really thinking in church.

All of us grew up in the Land of Word Scrambles. We've all been

trained to underuse our brains.

So we must be patient. And we can't give up after our first attempt at

cultivating thinking. Our people will at first stare at us like deer

stunned in the headlights. But they'll come around. They'll grow to

love the stimulation that thinking brings. And their faith will grow.

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled,

but a lamp to be lit."

Anonymous

The "DO IT" section that follows offers practical programming ideas to

help you share and apply these principles in your church.

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\*DO IT\*

Discover ways to create a thinking atmosphere in your church. The

following ideas can spark teacher training ideas, yet they can also be

adapted to classrooms for older children, youth and adults. In fact,

taking students through some of these exercises will set the stage for

greater thinking in the future‑because they'll understand why things

are changing in the classroom. Go for it!

http://www.joshhunt.com/whynob.html

See #3

Why Nobody Learns Much 3

7 Thinking Boosters

1. Develop a cadre of great askers.

Teachers will need to shift from old ways of doing things. Delve into

the "Encouraging Thinking" section on page XX.

Plan to dissect each strategy by creating two different thinking

approaches:

The "chills and kills" approach uses closed‑ended questions, doesn't

wait for answers and discourages further questions.

The "sparks and embarks" approach uses open‑ended questions and

follow‑up questions, allows wait time, and encourages questions.

Here's how to begin.

Create five teams (a team can be one person). Assign each team one of

the five portions of the "Encouraging Thinking" section:

(1) Ask open‑ended questions.

(2) Ask follow‑up questions.

(3) Wait for students' answers.

(4) Don't evaluate students' discussion responses.

(5) Encourage students' questions.

Have teams read and discuss their section and prepare "classroom"

scenarios that will teach the group their strategy.

Assign each team a scripture to portray in their classroom scenario.

For example, use - Genesis 11:1‑9 - Genesis 11:1‑9} (tower of

Babel); - Psalm 23 - Psalms 23} (shepherd's psalm);

- Matthew 4:1‑11 - Matthew 4:1‑11 - (Jesus' temptation);

- Luke 15:1‑7 - Luke 15:1‑7} (lost sheep); - 1

Corinthians 13 - 1 Corinthians 13} (love chapter). Or assign only one

passage to all the teams and see what each comes up with to represent

their assigned strategy.

Have each team prepare two brief classroom scenarios to present to the

entire group that demonstrate the point they studied. One scenario

must represent the "chills and kills" thinking approach that shows

what not to do‑even though it may be typical or natural for most

teachers. The second scenario must show the "sparks and embarks"

thinking approach explained in their section of the chapter.

For example, the "chills and kills" scenario could show a teacher

asking the students yes‑or‑no/fill‑in‑the‑blank answers with only one

excited, very interested student raising her hand to answer.

The "sparks and embarks" scenario could show a teacher asking

open‑ended questions that kids take time to think about, then discuss

with thoughtful responses.

After each team "acts up," discuss the differences in the two

scenarios. What's scary about the "chills and kills" scenario? Jot

those fears on newsprint or a chalkboard for all to see. (Plan to use

the list later in prayer.) Then create another written column of fears

concerning the "sparks and embarks" scenario.

Analyze the fear list. Are there common threads? Who or what are

people most afraid of? How can those fears be overcome? What's the

Holy Spirit's role in the thinking process?

Conclude with a circle prayer. Have each person pray about one of the

fears on the list.

2. Create a "safe" thinking place.

Before you launch into requiring more student participation and

thought, assess the class atmosphere. For example, is there one person

who spouts theology and intimidates the less knowledgeable? Do the

junior highers hurl putdowns that insult certain class members? Are

there too many kindergartners for one teacher, so some feel trampled

and left out? All these things could contribute to people not feeling

"safe" to think.

Use the "Safe Thinking Zone Ahead?" quiz below.

Safe Thinking Zone Ahead?

Rate your learning setting by marking the appropriate box.

1. There's adequate adult supervision/leadership.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

2. People listen to the person speaking.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

3. People show respect in the way they talk to one another.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

4. People show respect in the way they act toward one another.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

5. The teacher shows respect to each person and each person's ideas.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

6. Expectations and rules are clear.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

7. Rules are few.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

8. People know the consequences if they violate the rules.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

9. The teacher models being a learner.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

10. Humor is used positively, never to put down a person or that

person's thoughts.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

11. Everything that's taught and done has a clear purpose that aligns

with your goal for learning in the church.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

12. Mistakes and failures are viewed as opportunities for growth and

further learning.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

13. People feel a sense of trustworthiness among the group to take

risks.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

14. People feel a sense of care and concern from others.

\_Always

\_Sometimes

\_Never

Tally the number of boxes you checked for each:

\_\_\_Always

\_\_\_Sometimes

\_\_\_Never

If most of your boxes said "Never," you've got a long road ahead to

change the atmosphere to a safe one. Find a support person or group of

people who'll help you make the significant changes necessary. Train

students to strive for the 14 items listed in the quiz. With God's

help and the help of others it is possible to change and bring people

on board for a new, more exciting, life‑changing approach to learning.

If most of your boxes said "Sometimes," congratulations! You've got a

good start. People in learning situations understand the tip of the

"safe" iceberg. Continue to verbalize the 14 items listed in the quiz.

This will help train others to focus on the same goal, so you can move

more toward "Always."

If most of your boxes said "Always," GREAT! You've obviously worked

hard to achieve trust and clear boundaries. Keep it up and use the 14

items listed on the quiz to help others to join in your "safety"

cause. You've mastered a safe zone for thinking!

3. Help students succeed by being very clear about your expectations.

Together create a "covenant" or agreement for your class.

One successful teacher begins every year with one rule: RESPECT.

Students explore respect and divide it into three categories: respect

for the teacher, respect for one another, and respect for the

facility. Together they decide what that means: what respect looks

like, sounds like and feels like in each category. Next they design a

colorful poster with the word "respect" on it, plus their definitions.

Once it's completed, each person signs the poster as a commitment to

respect. Since the teacher has used this activity, the classes have

run more smoothly and the atmosphere is more conducive to thinking.

Here's a list of expectations that promote thinking among students.

Talk about the list. Don't keep it a secret! Let people know how

important these elements are to the success of the class. You'll

commit to doing the best you can and expect the same in return. Help

students develop these skills:

listen to one another

participate

take time to think‑ and feel okay about that

give reasons for answers

stay on the task or topic

ask thought‑provoking questions

4. Study how Jesus asked questions.

Turn teachers into detectives. Do a Bible study that explores Jesus'

question‑asking techniques. Have teachers pair up and divide one

Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) into sections among the group. Or

if you have four groups, assign one Gospel to each group. Have them

list on paper every question Jesus asked in their portion of

scripture. Encourage teachers to analyze why the question was so

effective or powerful in each setting. What can they learn about

formulating questions after studying Jesus' questions?

5. Learn to phrase thought‑provoking questions.

In the book Endangered Minds by Jane Healy, the author speaks of

children lacking experience with "wh" questions (who, what, when,

where, why and how). "Studies demonstrate that educating teachers in

specific questioning techniques can improve their students' reading

comprehension, among many other skills, by moving their thinking up

from literal repetition of facts into the realms of comprehension,

application and inferential reasoning."12 Here are samples of some

particular types of questions:

Closed‑ended question: "What did Goldilocks do when she got to the

three bears' house?"

Comprehension question: "Why did Goldilocks like the little bear's

chair best?"

Application question: "If Goldilocks had come into your house, what

are some of the things she might have used?"

Analysis question: "How can we tell which things belong to which

bear?"

Synthesis question: "How might the story be different if Goldilocks

had visited the three astronauts?"

Evaluation question: " Do you think Goldilocks had a right to do what

she did? Why or why not?"13

Share the preceding information with teachers. Discuss each kind of

question. Have teachers each bring their curriculum teachers guide to

review. Where there are closed‑ended questions, replace them with

comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation

questions.

For fun, star all the questions in the teachers guide that require

higher‑order thinking. Count them and see how the questions rate on

making people think. How much of it do you have to adapt?

For additional flexing, assign teachers various scripture passages and

have them devise thought‑provoking questions for them.

6. Develop a list of tips for thought‑full teachers and classrooms.

Together, brainstorm ideas that will help students and teachers create

a thinking atmosphere. Discussion‑time ideas could include:

Write questions on the board or newsprint for all to see. (Since most

people are visual learners, this helps learners focus on questions

that might otherwise be lost because they're handled only verbally.)

Explain to students up front what you're up to. (Let students know

you're trying something new and why. Let them join in making a

thinking classroom happen.)

Tell students you'll wait for answers. (Good questions mean people

will need time to formulate answers.)

Let students know you'll be giving them feedback on their answers with

words such as "thank you" and "uh‑huh." If they're used to you gushing

praise on their answers, this will help them understand you aren't

disappointed with them, you just want to make sure everyone gets a

chance to think before assuming the "right" answer has already been

given.)

Explain the use of small group interaction. (Chapter 7 will address

that more in depth.)

7. Challenge teachers to break old habits.

If teachers want to improve their ability to ask better questions,

they can:

Use an audio or video cassette to record their class. This will help

"play back" the reality of what's asked during class time. (Those

who've done this warn teachers not to be too hard on themselves. Don't

pick at each little infraction, but rather evaluate the scope of

what's asked and ways to improve.)

Invite someone they respect to be their "observer." This person can

watch and analyze classroom interactions that the teacher might

overlook. They can spend time processing the class with their

observer, celebrating their successes and growing from their

weaknesses.

Invite students to listen for closed‑ended questions and point them

out to the teacher during class. (One courageous teacher who tried

this technique gave points to students who recognized closed‑ended

questions. She discovered this not only helped her, but got students

to really listen!)

Find a support system. Get together with other teachers who are trying

on new teaching methods. It'd make a great support group at church.

Then work on improving bit by bit. Don't give up. Remember, we've gone

for years and years teaching a certain way. It's not easy to break old

patterns. And it takes time to develop new habits.

Let God's words "Well done, good and faithful servant!" ring in your

heart.

http://www.joshhunt.com/whynob.html

/mDiscipleship

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Saintmaking 1

Saintmaking

by Josh Hunt

Have you ever seen an alcoholic trying to get off of alcohol? I have.

It is not a pretty sight. Pretty dog gone pitiful, really.

"Johnny, please, please, please, just one little drink. Please. If you

love me, Johnny. I am dying. You don't know what this feels like. I

just need one little drink. Just one. I won't ask for anymore. Please,

Johnny please. I know it is bad. I know it is awful. I know I am

awful. I am really ashamed of myself. I am really ashamed your friend

would see me like this. But, right now, I really don't care about all

that. Right now, all I want is one drink. I have just got to have a

drink. Now please, please, PLEASE, give me a drink. . ."

I have heard the endless begging and pleading and scratching a crying

and crawling and dying. It is humanity at its worst.

I have a theory‑‑a conviction really. Many sinful patterns are at

least as difficult to break as is the addiction to alcohol. An

addiction to pornography, or gossip, or materialism, or prejudice, or

a depression may be just as hard to break as an addiction to alcohol.

Saintmaking is hard work.

Growing a church is untimely about saintmaking. It is not about

gathering crowds. That is the easy stuff. The hard stuff is turning

sinners into saints. Saintmaking is hard work.

Here are some verses that speak to this:

- Galatians 3:22 - Galatians 3:22} But the Scripture declares

that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised,

being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who

believe.

This verse says we are prisoners to sin. The idea is we can't get out.

We can't escape sin's deadly grip. Here is another one:

- Ephesians. 2:1 - Ephesians 2:1} As for you, you were dead in

your transgressions and sins,

Here we are taught that we were dead in our sin. Dead people don't get

better through diet and exercise. They need someone on the outside to

raise them. Here is a third verse:

- Romans 5:6 - Romans 5:6} You see, at just the right time,

when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Here Paul reminds us that we were powerless to do anything about our

condition. Our hands were tied behind our back. We needs some force

outside of ourselves to untie us.

These three verses speak explicitly to the moment of salvation. They

also teach us volumes about saintmaking. The process of coming to

Christ and the process of becoming like Christ are very much the same.

They have to do with learning truth and repenting and faith.

The process of becoming a saint is just like the process of becoming a

Christian. We are saved in an instant, sanctified over a lifetime,

perhaps more. Still, the process is the same. It is about God

revealing himself to us. It is about recognizing and admitting that we

are sinners and are powerless to change. It is about a life of

confession and repentance. It is about embracing the acceptance that

God offers to sinners only on the basis of his grace; never on the

basis of our goodness. It is about standing in repentance. It is about

standing in grace. It is about standing in the acceptance of God. It

is about embracing the God who embraces me. It is about embracing his

love and his power. It is about taking hold of his power to live out

the Christian life. It is learning like Paul that, "I can do

everything through Christ." ( - Philippians 4:13 - Philippians

4:13}) It is about enjoying God.

The process of saintmaking is impossible to understand. How exactly

does God turn a sinner into a saint? I don't know. However, we can

understand the conditions necessary for saints to grow. The process by

which a seed sprouts and grows and finally reproduces seeds of its own

has alluded scientists for centuries. School children can understand,

however, that if your put a bean in water and expose it so sunshine it

will grow. Understanding the ingredients necessary for growth is far

easier than understanding the exact process by which growth happens.

This chapter is about the conditions necessary for saintmaking.

Myths about Maturity

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

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We can learn much through the process of elimination. By eliminating

the things that are not true, we make it easier to get about the

business of seeing the things that are true about saintmaking.

The most common myth regarding saintmaking is what I call "maturity by

hanging around." It is the myth that says if you stay in McDonalds

long enough, you will eventually turn into a hamburger. There is more

truth to that than the notion that if we simply hang around long

enough we will become a saint. Just hanging around church will not

make you a saint. Still many believe that if you attend enough bible

studies, go on enough mission trips or have enough quite times. . .

presto! out pops a saint. Occasionally, it does happen. Flowers grow

in odd places. The conditions for growth do not have to be perfect to

create life. Life is resilient enough to express itself in the

dessert, and saints can grow even if conditions are not optimal.

Still, if we intend to grow a garden we must be intentional and

knowledgeable about it.

Many believe that saintmaking is automatic. This too is a myth.

Saintmaking is not automatic. It is not even probable unless the soil

is carefully prepared. Because of the power of the world and the flesh

and the devil the odds are greatly against saintmaking. Unless we are

very intentional, purposeful, and knowledgeable, it will not happen,

except occasionally. But the exception does not prove the rule.

Saintmaking is difficult work and is best done by people who have

carefully thought through what they are doing and how they are doing

it.

Saintmaking is not the inevitable result of salvation. Many

times‑‑dare I say it‑‑most times it simply doesn't happen. This is why

Paul admonished so strongly "to work out your salvation with fear and

trembling," ( - Philippians 2:12 - Philippians 2:12})

Some equate saintmaking with activity. To hear some church leaders

though, you would think the goal was to make people "active." Pastors

talk over coffee about who is active in church and who is not. Active

is good. Inactive is bad. Jesus didn't tell us to go make people who

were active in church activities. Church activities can be a

distraction to the real business of enjoying God and serving him in

the world. Church activities can merely distract us from the main

thing. It makes us feel good to be active. We can even get confused

and think our acceptance by God is based on activity in church. We can

pridefully look down our noses at the people who are not active. We

are very far from the kingdom of God when we believe that acceptance

by God is based on church activity. Church activity can be a drug that

keeps us from feeling the pain of a bad marriage or a bitter

depression. Many marriages would be stronger if couples were not at

church 5 nights a week. Activity can be a means to an end. It is the

place of encouragement, equipping, fellowship, teaching and worship

that prepares us for a life of enjoying God and serving him in the

world. It can be the train that gets us to maturity. But it is not

necessarily so. It is possible to drive around in circles, spiritually

speaking. It is possible to spend a lot of time on the train and never

become mature. Activity in church alone does not guarantee maturity.

There are some who understand the myth of "maturity by hanging

around." They understand that maturity is not the same as being active

in church. They understand it is not automatic. They place their bets

with commitment. Commitment is the key to making great disciples.

Great disciples are people of great commitment. This is true, as far

as it goes. Great commitment is necessary to produce great

discipleship. It is the ticket to the party. - Luke

14:33 - Luke 14:33} In the same way, any of you who does not give up

everything he has cannot be my disciple. That's commitment. But, it is

possible to give up everything to follow Christ and still miss out.

Paul warned that without love we could give our bodies to be burned

and it would count for nothing. Commitment alone is the not enough to

produce disciples.

Knowledge is not enough. Knowledge is important and necessary. It is

the truth that sets us free. We are transformed by the renewing of our

minds. But, the point is not to make us smarter sinners; the point is

to make us saints.

Maturity is not automatic. It must be intentional. We must renounce

the myth of maturity is hanging around. Church attendance alone is not

enough. Commitment alone is not enough. Knowledge alone is not enough.

What does it take to make disciples? What are the conditions necessary

to produce saints?

How God Changes People

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

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I approach this subject from a great deal of personal interest.

Someone came to me once and said something like this, "I don't

understand it; I can't explain it; I wish it were not true.

Christianity does not work for me. I attend the services. I go to the

Bible studies. I try to do all this stuff. But, it just isn't working.

I am not able to live the life I know I am supposed to live." Last

night, my wife and I reflected on that conversation. "What made the

difference for you?" I asked. "What was missing then that you were not

able to put it together in living the life?"

It was a strange thing for me back then. Living the life of a

minister. Trying to make disciples and lead a church to make

disciples. Yet, this one who was closest to me, who was at my side,

who attended all the meetings and did all the stuff was beyond

frustrated. She was dead. She had simply given up. She had been

frustrated, but no longer. Frustration assumes a blocked goal. She had

given up. If you try and fail long enough, you eventually just give

up. Sharon was at that point.

What was missing? She had attended worship and Bible study. She had

many Christian friends that she fellowshipped with. She was exposed to

good Christian teaching. I knew her. I knew she honestly tried. Here

was someone who had given their life to God and to the church, and

said, "Here I am, make a disciple out of me." Ten years later she was

no closer to the goal than when she started.

If the church failed to make a disciple out of one person we could

write it off and go on. What I learned next convinced me otherwise.

The path we were on led us to the counselor's office. We went through

several regimes of therapy. I read deeply in the recovery literature.

What I found shocked me. Many many many Christians are trying and

failing to live the Christian life. Sharon was not alone. Many try but

cannot seem to make the Christian life work. It is a depression or a

lust problem or some blind spot or a chemical dependency cycle of

abusiveness or something. It is not saintly. It is not pretty.

One of two things is true. Either the Christian psychologists are

writing about a lot of fictitious people, or there are a lot of people

for whom the Christian life is basically, fundamentally not working.

They can't explain it. They don't understand it. They wish it were not

true. They come to church. They worship. They attend Bible Studies.

They try. They really try. They really really try. And it just doesn't

work. Works for others; they understand and accept that. But, it just

doesn't seem to work for them. If Christian psychologists are at all

in touch with reality, there are millions of people out there for whom

this is true.

Christian therapy is a burgeoning industry that is picking up the

pieces of what the church is failing to deliver. Counselors are doing

what churches have not. I am grateful for therapy. I am grateful for

the counselors I have been helped by. I have benefitted for the

recovery books I have read. I am grateful that they have benefitted

others. But, it causes me to wonder, "Is this God's plan? Discipleship

by professional, $100 an hour therapy?"

The counselors I have talked to would respond with a resounding "No."

Discipleship by professional counselor is not God's plan. Professional

counselor's can help in the cases where they are needed, as every

member of the body of Christ is needed. But they are not the bread and

butter strategy for making disciples.

Most counselors will argue that much of what they do could be done and

ought to be done routinely in Christian fellowship. "Most of what I do

is just listen to people and love them," they say. Listen and love;

simple. Why don't we do it?

The answer is as easy as it is profound. Church has ceased to be a

hospital for admitted sinners. Church has become a club for nice

people. People don't confess their sins to each other, and there is no

healing taking place. We don't admit to each other, except in a very

general way, that we are sinners. We say that we are sinners, but we

do not talk about he sins that we struggle with. We pretend we are

nice people who have it all together.

The gospel we embrace teaches us otherwise. The bible teaches us that

we are all sinners, all cut from the same bolt of cloth as Hitler and

Charles Manson. All capable of the worst of sins. But we interact with

each other in such a way that we pretend it is not true. The Bible

teaches that as long as this is true, we will never find the healing

our soul needs. "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each

other so that you may be healed." ( - James 5:16 - James 5:16})

Again, no healing is promised to the person who confesses their sin

only to God and never to another human being. We are not confessing

our sins to one another. When was the last time you heard a brother

say to you, "May I confess my sins to you?" When was the last time you

confessed your sin to a priest? I venture it has been a while. No

wonder we are sick people. God told us it would be true.

When I confess my sins, there are two things I don't need to hear:

condemnation and law. Condemnation has no place in Christian

experience, and law never changed anyone.

Many people‑‑many Christians‑‑don't believe this. They believe in

grace, for sure. But they believe in grace plus. Grace plus a little

bit of condemnation. "There has to be balance." Little bit of grace,

little bit of condemnation. Balance. Baloney! There is no place in

Christian experience for condemnation. None. It is all grace balanced

with truth. Not condemnation, truth.

Truth says if you keep sinning you will screw up you life. It will

cost you. There may be consequences you don't want to live with. But

it will never call into question whether you are loved by God or me.

That is grace and truth. Until we become skilled priests who can

represent God to each other there will be no saintmaking.

We think confessing our sins to a priest is a catholic concept. It is

not. It is a biblical one. Our difference with the Catholics is not

over whether we should confess our sins to a priest. This is spelled

out in scripture. Of course we must. Our difference with the Catholics

has to do with who the priests are. We believe in the priesthood of

all believers. We believe that we all can and should represent God to

each other as priests.

We are afraid to do this because we are afraid of condemnation.

Confession is hard. It involves risk. It involves exposure. It

involves exposing my tender insides to the possibility of

condemnation. If I receive condemnation, however, I can be sure of one

thing: I did not expose my tender inside to a priest. Rather, I have

exposed myself to a son of condemnation, and we know who his father

is.

The truth is I will stay afraid of condemnation until I confess my

sin. I will always wonder if I am really forgiven and accepted and

loved until the real me comes out in the light and hears someone say

verbalize grace to me. This is the work of the priest‑‑to verbalize

grace. There is no saintmaking until the sinners comes into the light

and a priest pronounces the words of grace to him: "On the authority

of the very words of God, I pronounce your forgiven, clean and

accepted, brother. Your sins are forgiven." Ahhh! Grace is so sweet.

But there is more.

Priests do more than listen as people confess their sins. They do what

God does. They offer to help. They ask, "How can I help you in this

area to 'go and sin no more.'' An informed disciple will answer

something like . . .

"You could help me be calling me once a week and asking me if my

thought life is what it should be," or

"Ask me ever so often how I am doing with my temper," or

"Tell me how you discipline your children," or

"Teach me how to control my anger," or

"Just hold me for about five minutes," or

"I honestly don't think I need any more help. You have been great.

Thanks."

In other words, the confessor may want to ask the priest to hold them

accountable.

There is more misunderstanding per square inch on the topic of

accountability than just about anything else. Accountability is

helping another person reach his goals. It is not imposing my will on

to them. That is controlling. That is sin. Accountability is always at

the invitation of the person being held accountable. They can ask you

not to hold them accountable if they like. There is a place for

confronting a sister for her sin, but that is not what we are talking

about here. That is church discipline; this is accountability. The key

issue in accountability is that the person holding someone accountable

always serves at the request of the one they serve.

Many of us need accountability do live the disciplined life we need to

live. It is part of the necessary ingredients to saintmaking. Most

people mean well, but are not all that disciplined. We need bothers

and sisters to ask us on a regular basis.

This is what fellowship is all about. It is not just tea and cookies.

It is creating an atmosphere where the real me has a chance to be

real. It is creating a place where I can confess my sins. It is

offering to hold a brother accountable for his goals. It is the stuff

of discipleship. It is an ingredient in the soil that grows saints.

But there is more.

http://www.joshhunt.com/saint.html

See #2

/mDiscipleship

/sSaintmaking 2

/i43

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See #1

Worship

John recorded that when we see Him, we will be like Him. There is

something about seeing God that makes us godly. Fifty years ago A.W.

Tozer wrote that worship is the missing jewel of the church. I am

afraid it is still missing. Let us be clear. There will be no

saintmaking without all‑out worship.

Worship does something to the soul that nothing else can. Worship

helps us to see God. Worship helps us to refocus our priorities.

Worship is the prerequisite to seeing our sin and repenting of it. We

are so smug about our goodness because we have not seen God. People

who get a peak into the heavenlies come out with their face in their

hands. They come out weeping and crying, "Woe is me, I am ruined."

( - Isaiah 6:5 - Isaiah 6:5})

Donald McCullough has served the church well in rebuking us for the

Trivialization of God. "Reverence and awe have often been replaced by

a yawn of familiarity. The consuming fire has been domesticated into a

candle flame, adding a bit of religions atmosphere, perhaps, but no

heat, no blinding light, no power for purification."(1)

I said in the section above that the problem with most churches is

that they have become a club for nice people rather than a hospital

sinners. Assuming this is true, what is the solution? Shall we sin

that grace may abound? May it never be. ( - Romans 6:1 - Romans

6:1}) We don't need to sin anymore. We have sinned plenty. The problem

is our perception of ourselves as nice people when we are in fact,

sinners. The solution is not more sin, it is better worship. Seeing

the light helps us to see the dirt more clearly. Only when we see the

sin can we confess and know the joy of grace.

Jesus taught that whoever has "been forgiven little loves little."

( - Luke 7:47 - Luke 7:47}) This poses an interesting dilemma.

You want to love God a lot, don't you? I do. Jesus said if you have

not been forgiven very much, you won't love God very much. What

conclusion do you draw as a path to loving God more? Sin more? That

would miss an important detail of what Jesus said. Jesus did not say

people who have sinned much love God much. Many people who have sinned

much do not love God at all. Their sinfulness does not draw them to

God. Their heart grows colder with each passing day. Sin does not

cause them to love God more. Forgiveness does. Jesus said that whoever

has been forgiven little loves little. If you would love God more, ask

forgive you more.

Simple you say, I can do that. I can ask God to forgive me more. No.

You are wrong. You cannot. The Bible teaches that repentance is a

gift. ( - 2 Timothy 2:25 - 2 Timothy 2:25}) We cannot repent on

our own. We need God's help because we are blinded so that we cannot

see our own sin. We cannot repent more except that God reveal to us

our sin. Or sins lie in a blind spot so that we cannot see them.

You have had the experience, as I have, of having the Holy Spirit

convict you of sins that you have been over a long period of time. You

get up every day and spend time with the Father. Each day you confess

your sins. You think of everything you can that would hurt the heart

of God. Then, one day, the Holy Spirit reveals something you have been

doing for years. Perhaps it is a petty dishonesty or a hurtful way you

have been relating to your wife or a failed opportunity at service or

an ineffectiveness in ministry‑‑whatever‑‑the Holy Spirit screams the

transgression to you so that you finally see it. For a moment, you

cannot see anything else. You wonder how in the world you went all

those years so blind. That is what the Bible says about us, we are

blind. We need God to grant us the gift of repentance and faith.

We cannot force the hand of God to give us the gift of seeing our sins

so that we can repent of them and receive his grace. We can, however,

stand close to his throne. It is closeness to God that always, always,

always reveals our sin. Worship draws us close to God. We enter into

his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.

( - Psalm 100:4 - Psalms 100:4})

You have known hard‑hearted believers, haven't you? Ever hear a sermon

that sounded like it was crafted for a particular person's sin and

they never hear it? We can be very very blind. Chance are, you and I

are still very very blind in certain areas. Have you asked for the

gift of repentance lately?

The gift of repentance is quite a gift because it without it there is

no grace. And without grace, their is no Christianity. Only the smelly

stuff of pharaseeism. Christianity is continually standing in

repentance and grace.

When people worship God, God gives them the gift of repentance. Only

in the light can we see the dirt.

How are we doing. If we can believe the surveys, not very well.

Barna's research indicates 61% of those who attend church say they

sense God's presence only occasionally, seldom, or never.(2) That is

not a 61% success rate‑‑that would be bad enough. That is a 61%

failure rate. Sixty one percent of people who come to church don't

find God. We gotta do better than that.

I am not just talking about attending a worship service. I am talking

about a certain kind of worship. In fact, it wouldn't have to be in a

worship service, though most of us are well served by someone leading

us to worship. Most of us don't get around to private worship often

enough on our own. One of the greatest travesties is worship services

where two out of three people there don't worship.

The worship of which I speak is the kind of worship where people are

swept away into the presence of God. Where people see God in their

spirits and hardly see anything else. Where people forget about their

cares, their problems, their affections and their attractions to be

wonderfully attracted again by the sheer wonder of God. Worship that

leaves your mouth dropped open. Worship that leaves you speechless.

Worship that leaves your cheeks wet and your heart warm. How long has

it been since you worshiped like that?

By the way, the worship of which I speak rarely happens accept I am

concentrating on God alone. That is why it is important that churches

provide for children to learn to worship separate from their parents.

When my children are beside me, I tend to think about them and worry

with whether they are behaving properly. I can tend to kids, or I can

worship. I cannot do both at the same time. Not real worship. The

worship of which I speak requires an undivided heart. I cannot worship

in a way that changes my soul and, at the same time, see that my

children do not talk too loudly or roll crayons down the slopped floor

of the sanctuary. If you would lead people to worship, provide

something for their children‑‑even their older children‑‑during

worship.

Without worship like that there is no discipleship. Without worship

like that, we will never be all God intended. When we see him, we will

be like him.

If you are serious about the business of saintmaking, create an

atmosphere where people can be honest with each other and honest about

their sins. Create an atmosphere where people can and will and do

confess their sins to one another. And create an atmosphere where

people who come to a worship service worship. There is no saintmaking

with out it. One more thing is needed.

Teaching

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We need fellowship to make disciples. But not just any kind of

fellowship; fellowship where I can confess my sins to a priest and

that priest will represent God to me and be to me grace and truth.

Never condemnation; grace and truth.

We need worship to make saints. Not just any kind of worship. Worship

that leads me to see God and begs he give me the gift of repentance,

faith and grace.

We need teaching to make disciples. It is the truth that sets us free.

( - John 8:32 - John 8:32}) We are transformed by the renewing

of our minds. ( - Romans 12:2 - Romans 12:2}) But, not just any

kind of teaching.

Teaching that makes disciples is long on application. It shows people

how. It does not merely tell what we are to do or why we are to do

them. Teaching that produces saints shows people how to live the

Christian life.

Most believer would gladly live the Christian life if someone would

just show them how. It is teacher's job to show people how. Very

specifically. Very methodically. Very systematically, we need to show

believers. . .

How to have a daily time with God

How to know we are born again

How to conquer temptation

How to love a woman

How to discipline children

How to confess sins

How to be a priest

How to hold someone accountable without being controlling

How to be a person of grace and not condemnation

How to memorize scripture

How to witness

How to know your spiritual gifts and discover your place in the body

of Christ

How to resolve conflict

How to become a person of faith and confidence

How to deal with life when life deals you a bad hand

How to enjoy God

On and on and on. Good teaching shows believers specifically how to

live the Christian life. Good teaching makes it easy for believers to

be doers of the word and not hearers only. ( - James

1:22 - James 1:22})

We have dealt with three ingredients in the soil of saintmaking:

fellowship, worship and teaching. There is one more.

Pain

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Pain has a way of doing something to our souls that nothing else can.

There is something about pain that will mold us and make us into the

shape of Christ that nothing else will do. Study the lives of people

that God had greatly used and you will find people that have

experience much pain.

Even though I know this, I still find myself disobedient to the

command of God to not be surprised by pain. ( - 1 Peter

4:12 - 1 Peter 4:12}) I am still surprised. I still say, "Why me? Why

now? When will it ever stop?" I have often found myself disobedient to

James' admonition to "Count it all joy." ( - James 1:2 - James

1:2})

I still remember my last spanking as a child. I was crawling to find

some way of escape on the top bunk as my mother wielded her weapon.

"Ouch! That hurts, Mom!" I honestly expected her to be surprised,

apologize and stop. Maybe if I was lucky, some milk and cookies.

Surely she didn't mean to hurt her boy. "I meant for it to hurt." She

knew that pain would drive the folly far from me. But, it has to hurt.

Pain hurts. That is why they call it pain.

There is no discipleship without pain. While we are designing systems

to encourage members to memorize scripture and be priests to each

other and worship God as he deserves to be worshiped, God is working

on another curriculum; a curriculum of pain.

We do not have to provide a curriculum of pain. God will provide that.

He can find plenty of sinful people to hurt us and plenty of folly in

our hearts to get us into trouble. We need not try to find pain. It

will find us.

I don't know what it is about that pain that works its miracles, just

as I do not know what is in an antibiotic that makes the sickness go

away. All I know, I take it and I feel better. Pain is like that.

You can tell people that have experience pain, can't you? I can. They

have a softness about them. The sarcasm and harshness and

heartlessness is gone. They are broken. They are like God. Pain did

that. Even Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered.

( - Hebrews 5:8 - Hebrews 5:8}) So must we. Jesus was called a

man of sorrows acquainted with grief. ( - Isaiah 53:3 - Isaiah

53:3}) People who are acquainted with sorrow act like Jesus. People

who have never known sorrow act like mere people.

The only appropriate response to a brother in pain is compassion. They

do not need lectures. They do not need teaching. They do not need

condemnation. They do not need to be told that their sin or their

stupidity caused this, even though it may have. They just need to be

held. They need to be told you care. They need compassion.

We need not invent pain. We do need to prepare for it. We need to

teach about it. We need to tell people it is coming and that it is a

necessary part of the saintmaking process. A well taught believer will

never ask, "Why me?" He knows better. He has been tutored to say to

himself, "Why not me? This is part of the curriculum. I knew it was

coming. The Bible tells me so." If I know that pain is part of the

curriculum, at least I can prepare. We can tell people that pain is

coming and we can admonish people to reach out to people in pain. We

can encourage people to share their pain with others. We can show

people how to help people in pain.

Conclusion

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I do not understand saintmaking. I do not understand the process by

which God turns a hardened sinner into a broken, passionate saint. I

do not understand growth of any living thing. I do not understand how

God turns a pumpkin seed into a pumpkin or a human seed into a baby

and then an adult. I do not understand the process; however, I do

understand the conditions under which seeds become full grown. Seeds

need water and soil and warmth and sunshine and nutrients.

I do not understand the process by which saints are created. I do,

however, understand the conditions necessary to turn a newly born

again believer into a full blown saint. The soil must contain

fellowship where we become priests to one another. The soil must

include worship that moisten the cheeks and drys the throat. The soil

must contain teaching that points the way. The soil must contains

stones.

20 Questions

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1. Who have you known that hung around church a lot, for many, many

years, and never really seemed to become a mature follower of Christ?

2. What went wrong?

3. Describe the most mature example of the kind of person we are

trying to create that you have known?

4. What do you know of this person's process toward becoming a saint?

How did they get where they are?

5. What about for you? What have been the most pivotal events that

have pole vaulted you to the next level spiritually?

6. What setback have blocked your progress toward maturity?

7. On a scale of one to ten, how would you evaluate the average

maturity level in your church?

8. What are the most common myths about maturity that people you know

seem to hold to?

9. Why do you think the Protestant church has forgotten the truth of

- James 5:16 - James 5:16}?

10. How can we teach people to be priests to one another?

11. Describe the most meaningful experience of worship you have ever

been a part of?

12. How could we improve worship so that 90% of the people who

attended our worship services encountered God?

13. Why is worship important to the saintmaking process?

14. How would you evaluate the worship in your church? What do you

feel good about?

15. What would you most like to improve?

16. What is the place of pain in saintmaking?

17. Describe a painful season in your life when God used the pain to

take you to the next level?

18. How can we prepare people for pain?

19. What do people need to know in order to help a friend who is in

pain?

20. Is there anyone going through something right now that is

difficult and you would like the group to pray for you and encourage

you?

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http://www.joshhunt.com/saint.html

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Muzzle The Talkative Person - How to Muzzle the Overly Talkative Person by Josh Hunt

How to Muzzle the Overly Talkative Person

by Josh Hunt

One person can single handedly ruin a class. All the prayer, study and

preparation that went into the lesson can be ruined by one person who

talks too much. It is frustrating to the teacher and frustrating to

the other pupils. Here is what you can do about it.

The Indirect Appeal

If the problem is mild but persistent, this is the best way to deal

with it. Begin the class session with a statement of your goals. You

might say something like this:

My goal for this class is to involve everyone in the discussion. Does

everyone agree that this is a good goal? OK, then I want to ask for

your help. I want to ask some of you to get real brave and dive in a

little more often, while I want to ask some of you to back off until

everyone has had a chance to talk. I am not trying to squelch the

conversation; quite the contrary. I am trying to get everyone talking.

If we get into the discussion and you have shared several times and

you notice some of the rest have not shared so much, I want to ask you

to back off. Sound fair enough?

Get everyone to nod and agree. If the problem persists, you can

probably get away with reminding everyone one time during class about

the goal. Beyond this, I would go to the Private Appeal.

The Private Appeal

The private appeal has the same goal and works in much the same way.

Because it is private it tends to be more direct and therefor

effective. The key is to not approach this as scolding; that will

never work. Instead, appeal to a common goal: good group discussion.

The private appeal might go something like this:

Bob, have you noticed that I just can't seem to get everyone in the

class talking? It is really frustrating for me as the teacher. I was

wondering if you could help me? Here is what I have in mind. I know

you know the answer to a lot of the questions I ask. Often times, you

answer exactly right as soon as I ask. While this gets us to the right

answer right away, I would sill like to see if I could get some of the

quiet people talking. What would you think about helping me out by

backing off a bit and not answering so quickly? Let's see if we can

get everyone involved.

The Direct Appeal

There comes a time to be more direct. The needs of the many outweigh

the needs of the few. It is better to hurt one person's feelings, if

that what it takes, than to let one person ruin the whole group for

the rest. There is a lot riding on this. Courage is necessary. If it

comes down to it, you might need to say something like this:

Bob, can I shoot straight with you? You are talking about twice as

much as anyone else in the group. While you have some good things to

say, others won't talk when you are doing as much talking as you are.

I need to ask you to back off a bit. Here is a rule for you to follow:

don't talk three times everyone else has talked once. I really need

you to do this for the group. Can you do that for me?

What Is Wrong With These People, Anyway?

In order to effectively deal with overly talkative people, it is

helpful to understand what drives them. I can think of at least two

things:

Some people are just buffoons. These are those fun loving,

enjoy‑talking, happy people. They are the easiest to deal with. We can

make a joke out of the issues with these people. "Come on, Mary, let

someone else have a shot."

Some talkers are deeply insecure. They deal with their insecurity by

talking, talking, talking. Talking feels like love to them. It feels

like love to them when they talk and others listen. These people must

be handled more carefully. The only way to really solve the problem is

to help them with this core need. We must muzzle them, and make them

feel good in the process. This can be a real challenge, but no one

said teaching a small group would be easy. Compliment them. Praise

them. Take them to lunch. Don't reject them. Don't crush them. Love

them.

What If Nothing Works?

The needs of the many out way the needs of the few. An overly

talkative person can single handedly ruin a Sunday School class. Do

the brave thing. Do the courageous thing. Do the loving thing. Do

whatever it takes to create a group discussion. Love them, but love

the group as well. Do what it takes to keep the whole group talking.

Do what needs to be done, but do it with grace. Remember, this is a

brother for whom Christ's died. If you do not love him as Christ loves

him, you will never help him to change. People only change in an

atmosphere of love. Be grace and truth to him. Grace is about telling

him he is accepted. Truth is about telling him he is driving everyone

craze and he needs to be quiet.

Your Support Makes This Ministry Possible!

This ministry is supported in the same way your church is

supported‑‑through the voluntary and generous contributions from the

people we serve. Like your pastor, I am not "in it for the money."

And like your pastor, I need to feed my kids. I dream of providing an

ever growing library of resources aimed at helping groups double every

two years or less. The ultimate goal is to help the church in America

double over the next 20 years by helping the individual teacher to

double every two years or less and helping pastors double their

churches every five years or less. This ministry serves people all

around the world, from China to Japan to the USA. (It really is a

World Wide Web.) If you use these lessons regularly, I would like to

ask you or your church to make a regular contribution to this

ministry. Make checks to Josh Hunt and mail to 2744 Crown Point, Las

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10 Marks of Great Teaching by Josh Hunt

- 4/2001.101

10 Marks of Great Teaching

by Josh Hunt

An unexamined life is not worth living. Unexamined teaching is not all

that great either. If you would improve your teaching, begin by

evaluating.

What do you do well?

What comes naturally for you?

What do you struggle with?

Evaluation is the beginning point of any improvement process.

I use ten characteristics to evaluate a good lesson. Every one of

these does not have to be in every lesson. Build on your strengths.

The quickest way to improve your teaching is not to focus on making

your weaknesses better. Rather, the best way to improve your teaching

is to make your strengths stronger. Work on overcoming your weaknesses

as well, but concentrate on maximizing your strengths. Here are ten

benchmarks of great teaching. Use these as a plumb line to evaluate

your teaching.

Passion

Did you present the truth with some fire? If the truth does not matter

to you, it will not matter to them. Howard Hendricks is fond of

saying, "if you are going to bore people, don't bore them with the

Gospel. Bore them with calculus, bore them with earth science, bore

them with world history. But, it is a sin to bore people with the

Gospel." Someone asked Spurgeon once, "What is the secret of great

preaching?" He replied, "Get on fire with the Gospel and people will

come to watch you burn." This was the approach of the Psalmist in

- Psalm 39:3 - Psalms 39:3}: "My heart grew hot within me, and

as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue." This

ought to be the goal of every teacher: to cultivate a hot heart before

you speak. I have seen teachers with mediocre content who spoke with

such conviction that you just had to listen. This is not one of those

either/or things. You can have both good content and communicate it

passionately. This is teaching at its best. Apollos was an example of

accuracy and fervor:

- Acts 18:25 - Acts 18:25} He had been instructed in the way

of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus

accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. It is possible,

of course, to have a passionate heart and not let it come out. Often

times, gestures and voice inflection need to be overdone in order to

appear interesting at all. Animation in teaching is like stage

make‑up. The point is not to look like you have make‑up on. The point

is to look normal. If you do not have make‑up on when you are on

stage, you will look flat. In a similar way, the point of animation in

teaching is not so much to appear animated, but to appear normal. If

you use a normal voice in teaching, you will probably sound flat

(read, boring). Not many teachers are too animated. Err on the side of

overdoing it. Ultimately, the point is not how fired up you appear,

but how fired up you really are. How deeply are you excited about the

grace of God? I close with my favorite verse in Romans. Note that this

is a command from God: Get fired up and stay that way.

- Romans 12:11 - Romans 12:11} Never be lacking in zeal, but

keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Rate yourself on a scale of one to ten. How passionate are you in your

teaching of the greatest news ever?

Practicality

Imagine yourself teaching your group this weekend. Now, in your

imagination, write a sign in red paint on each of their foreheads that

asks, "So what?" If your students were not so polite, they would ask

you the question out loud. That is what they want to know. "What

difference does this truth make to my Monday morning?" If you do not

have a ready answer to that question, go back to the study until you

get one. Teaching is about application.

Did you give specific application that can be applied to life this

week? Did you teach for a life‑change? People are not interested in

accumulating information that does not relate to their life. We are

not out to make smarter sinners. We are seeking to change lives.

Disciple making is about application.

The key thing is to ask for small, specific, incremental changes. Do

not push for monumental changes every week, just try to get a little

bit of change each week. Ask things such as, "What is one thing you

could do this week to demonstrate your concern for the lost." When

someone says, "I could pray once for my neighbor, John," make a hero

out of that person. That is application that begins to make a

difference and it paves the way for further application. The ship

begins to turn. The application does not need to be, "See ten people

come to faith this week." That is good, but too lofty for most people.

It is like asking someone to high jump 6 feet. Most of us need to

start with eighteen inches. Get people jumping over the bar before you

move it too high. If the bar is perceived to be too high, people will

not even attempt to jump it.

"Pray once this week" may be enough. Some application is better than

no application at all. Application needs to be specific and have a

time orientation. It needs to be something people can do this week. If

it is something that they are going to do next winter, or when the

kids are grown, or when they grow old, forget it. Application needs to

be small, and it needs to be something people can do this week.

It is also a good idea to ask each week about the application

suggested the previous week. "Last week we talked about praying for

our lost friends. Did anyone do this? What other steps could we take?"

In an open group such as a Sunday school class or cell group,

accountability needs to be kept pretty simple. Don't hold people

accountable for the last 25 verses they have been memorizing if you

expect new people to feel comfortable in the group. Those kind of

intense, accountability oriented discipleship groups are great in

creating depth. But in providing an open place for people to come,

they are a killer. Week‑to‑week accountability, however, will not run

people off.

Accountability needs to find the razor's edge of speaking the truth in

love. If we communicate condemnation to those who fail (and everyone

fails) we miss the gospel entirely. There is no place in Christian

experience for condemnation. There is, however a place for truth

spoken in love. If someone says, "I want to have a quiet time five

days this week and I want you to hold me accountable," we need to do

so.

I am familiar with a group leader who was holding a group accountable

for daily quiet times. When the group failed to have quiet times, he

would say, "That is OK, no big deal. I didn't have any quiet times

this week either." That kind of accountability will not make

disciples. We need to speak the truth in love. We need to communicate

that disobedience never cancels grace. It never calls into question

God's love for us. Sin does bear its consequences. We reap what we

sew. Condemnation says, "You are bad because you sinned." Grace says,

"You sinned. You are bad. That is obvious. But, there is grace. You

are accepted. You are forgiven. You are loved."

In addition, there is a fine line between accountability and

controlling. Accountability is holding people accountable for their

goals. Controlling attempts to manipulate people against their will.

The issue on the table is not the goodness of the activity. The issue

is, who gets to decide? Suppose you were to try to "hold someone

accountable" for not watching R rated movies because you have a

conviction about R rated movies. Suppose that they hold no such

conviction. Suppose you try to hold them accountable anyway. That is

not accountability. That is controlling. Accountability is holding

people accountable for their goals. About such matters Paul said,

"each one should be fully convinced in his own mind."

( - Romans 14:5 - Romans 14:5})

Bruce Wilkinson gives an extensive treatment of the importance of

application in his work, The Seven Laws of the Learner. He tells of

reading through and marking the manuscripts of great preachers in

order to identify the portions that were application and the portions

that were not application oriented. The best preachers, both

contemporary and in the past, had between 50% ‑ 75% application. Your

teaching also should emphasize application.

Finally, all application does not have to do with doing. Sometimes the

application is to feel or to believe. The application of

- Psalm 23 - Psalms 23} is to believe that God is my Shepherd

and that I need not want. I am obedient to the truth of the passage

when I rest in Him. The application of - Philippians

4:4 - Philippians 4:4} (Rejoice in the Lord always. . . ) is to enjoy

God. Many of the issues of Christian discipleship are issues of the

heart. If we do not see this, we run the risk of being Pharisee makers

instead of disciple makers. The Pharisees had application down to a

science, but they missed the issues of the heart.

Evaluate yourself on a scale of one to ten. Give yourself a ten if

every week you are teaching for a specific application. Give yourself

a one if you hardly ever do so.

Humor

Were there points when the group laughed together? Were there time

when the group grabbed their sides. slapped their knees, threw back

their heads and laughed? Laughter is one of the best indicators of

health in a group. When a group loves each other, when they enjoy

being together, when Christian fellowship is what it should be, people

laugh. When their is tension and ill will in the body, however, no one

laughs.

I am not talking about telling jokes. I am talking about the

spontaneous, unrehearsed laughter that bubbles up from healthy

relationships. There is nothing that makes the class time more

enjoyable than a little humor. Humor is the jam on the bagel.

Humor can often be used to open up the group to receive God's truth.

It lets everyone relax. Their guard comes down and they become more

responsive. You have probably had the experience, as I have, of

laughing until your side hurt, only to find a dagger in your side. A

speaker had skillfully used the sword of the Spirit in such a way that

you did not even know an incision had been made. Laughter was the

anesthetic.

It ought to be fun to come to class. It should to be more than fun‑‑it

should be informative and life changing and all the rest, but still

fun. Your class will tend to grow if people like to come to class.

I am not talking about pretending to be a stand up comic. (Although if

you hear a good joke that relates to the topic that is O.K. too.) The

key thing is to allow humor when it comes; you don't have to plan it.

Never force humor. There are few things as disgusting as someone

trying to be funny who isn't. Forced humor is worse than no humor at

all. But don't be so serious about studying the Word that you will not

let people enjoy the Christian fellowship and pleasure of being

together.

Rate yourself on a scale of one to ten. How well do you use humor in

your class?

Personal

If you want to make your teaching interesting and effective, make it

personal. Teaching that does not apply itself personally to people

does not apply at all. Good teaching is not about vague distant

abstractions. God is personal, and the process of Christian

discipleship is personal. Ask yourself:

Did you touch them where they live?

Were you open about yourself?

You need to make the application personal to your group, and you need

to be open enough to show how the truth works in your life. Do not use

exclusively personal illustrations, but do use some. This is a small

group. There is something very personal about small group ministry.

But you must set the tone for the rest of the group. They will

generally be as transparent and open as you are. One reason we have

small groups is so the universal message of the Gospel can be

personalized to the individual. Your job is to take the cloth and to

tailor it to fit the individual.

Being personal is also one of the best ways of creating interest.

People are interested in people ‑‑ especially the personal lives of

people. That is why the tabloids sell. Personalness is interesting. If

you ever sense that people's interest is slipping, remember this: one

of the best ways to grab the attention of the group is to tell how the

truth applies personally to you.

Don't take this too far. This is Sunday school, not therapy. I was in

a group once in which a member confessed to a previous life of

prostitution. The group was on the edge of their seats, holding their

breath. Her story held the interest of the group, but she never came

back. She felt too exposed and was embarrassed to show herself again.

She got caught up in the moment and was too transparent. This is not

what I am advocating.

I am talking about being as open, as transparent, and as honest as you

can be within the bounds of good sense and discretion. Unfortunately,

my experience has been that most groups are not personal enough.

Put yourself on a scale of one to ten. Do you teach in a way that is

personal and touches people where they live?

Involvement

Was everyone interested? Were they "with you"? Did you most of the

group participate in the discussion? Did over half the group talk? Or

were they looking at their watches?

One way to insure that people are involved is by asking questions and

getting the group talking. When you are talking, they may or may not

be interested. When they are talking, you can be sure that they are

interested. That is one of the advantages of asking questions. I will

devote a whole chapter to the art of asking good questions later in

this book.

Of course, people can be involved without saying anything. But if they

are answering a question, you can be almost sure they are paying

attention. Only very rarely can people talk and not listen to

themselves. These people are really difficult to teach. If they are

not involved, they are not learning, you are not teaching, and

disciples are not being made.

Examine yourself. Was the group involved and paying attention?

Preparation

Did you prepare well enough to present the lesson with confidence?

Confidence is everything. You will never master every detail of even a

short passage. That is the beauty of the Bible: we never plummet the

depths of its beauty and insight. But we do need to have a basic grasp

of what is in the text. Do not be afraid to tell people that you do

not know. On the other hand, try to know as much as you can!

Preparation shows itself both in content and in confidence.

One of the best ways to do this is to read the passage daily as part

of your devotional discipline. Read it often so that you have a good

feel for the text. Read it in several translations. Read it early in

the week. Ask your friends questions about the text. Involve yourself

in the text so you are very familiar with it and can speak confidently

about what the text says.

Preparation that yields confidence cannot be gained in the final

hours. You cannot look at a text for the first time on Saturday night

and teach well on Sunday morning. Preparation that yields confidence

is built slowly. Enjoy the passage. Learn from the passage. Let the

Holy Spirit be your teacher before you are your group's teacher.

Evaluate yourself on a scale of one to ten. Was your preparation

strong enough to give you a sense of confidence in teaching the

passage?

Background

Did you reveal some interesting background not evident from a casual

reading of the text? You need to know the text, but also you need to

know what lies behind the text. You need to be able to answer the

questions the text asks. For example, suppose you are teaching on

- Luke 13:4 - Luke 13:4

Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them ‑‑ do

you think they were more guilty than all the others living in

Jerusalem? There is an obvious question that you better know the

answer to: what is the deal with this tower? You as the teacher ought

to give a simple, straightforward answer to this question without

looking at any notes.

Sunday school needs to be more than a "pooling of ignorance". You will

have a few people in your group who will have studied, and you should

encourage them to do so. Still, you, the teacher, need to bring that

extra level of depth that makes the group feel it was worth coming

because they learned something they did not know before.

The longer you are at this, the easier this becomes. One of the joys

of studying the Bible is the accumulation of knowledge over years of

study. But, be careful! All our brains are buckets with holes (for

some of us it is mostly holes!). We need to make sure there is a

constant input of fresh information. That is the joy of preparation.

That is why many teachers love to spend money on books.

Place yourself on a scale of one to ten. Did I understand the

background well enough to dice the conversation with some fresh

information that is not obvious from a casual reading of the text?

Introduction

Did you seize their attention the moment you began? Did you begin the

lesson with something that pulled them to the edge of their chairs and

made them take notice? Or, did anyone secretly say to themselves, "Oh,

gee whiz, another Sunday school lesson. Yawn."

Two parts of the lesson ought to be especially well‑prepared, the

beginning and the end. Here are some tools you can employ to wake the

group up and get everyone paying attention:

A thought‑provoking question.

Example: is Christianity easy or hard?

A heartwarming story

Example: A boy was walking the seashore picking up starfish and

tossing them back into the ocean. Someone asked him what he was doing.

"The starfish will dry out and die if they are not thrown back into

the ocean." The beach was littered with mile after mile of starfish.

"You can't make a difference with all these star fish. Look around.

They go on for miles." The boy was silent. He stopped down and lifted

a drying starfish from the sand. With a flick of the wrist, he tossed

it to the safety of the water, saving it life. "I made a difference

with that one."

A shocking, or controversial statement.

Example: The world is lost and dying and going to hell, and you don't

give a damn. What is worse, you are more concerned about the fact that

I said the word "damn" than you are about the fact that the world is

lost and dying and going to hell.

Holding the group's attention during the whole hour is difficult

enough. The easiest time to get the group's attention is at the

beginning. If they do not lend you their attention then, they probably

never will. Remember, if their mind is wandering, you are not making

disciples.

Evaluate yourself on a scale of one to ten. Did you come off the

starting blocks with zest? Did you begin the lesson with an

attention‑getting opening?

Inspiration

Did you attempt to inspire them to do what you wanted them to do?

Teaching is more than telling them what happened or what ought to

happen. It is inspiring people to do what they ought to do. You may

not be the nation's best Christian motivator. You are not Zig Ziegler,

but you can learn from Zig Ziegler. People need, want, and crave

inspiration. Motivation is 90% of almost everything. Do not be afraid

to "preach a little." Challenge them to the worthy cause of living

fully devoted lives for Christ.

Most of know far more than we actually do. In most cases, the problem

is not knowledge, it is motivation. You must provide both how‑to and

want‑to.

There are two ways to motivate: with a carrot and with a stick. You

motivate by teaching the benefits of obedience (carrot) and the bad

things that happen when we are not obedient (stick). It is not very

motivating to be told we simply ought to do something because it is

right. - Hebrews 11:6 - Hebrews 11:6} teaches that faith has

its rewards: "And without faith it is impossible to please God,

because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that

he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Teachers need to show what

these rewards are. Giving has its rewards. Fidelity has its rewards.

Honesty has its rewards. Paint these rewards in large, colorful

letters.

On the other hand, the Bible is not squeamish about punishments and

neither should teachers. Warn them as a profit that bad things will

happen if they are unfaithful. Paint compelling word pictures about

the pain of disobedience.

Inspiration also has a lot to do with enthusiasm. People are not going

to get any more excited about living the Christian life than you are

about teaching your lesson. Motivate with enthusiasm. Remember,

enthusiasm means, "God in me."

A final component of inspiration has to do with your confidence in

your class members. If you believe they can do it, they probably can.

There is something very motivating about having someone in your corner

who believes you can do it. Teach from a positive faith that we can do

all things through Christ.

Evaluate yourself on a scale of one to ten. Did you go beyond telling

the group what they ought to do? Did you inspire them to do what they

ought to do? Do you use an appropriate balance of carrot and stick?

Focus

Did you have one "big idea" that you attempted to drive home

throughout the lesson? Did you hunt with a rifle or a shotgun? The

great danger for many teachers is not that they say too little but

that they say too much. Your lesson needs to have a central focus, a

big idea. If someone stopped you before you walk into your class and

asked, "What are you teaching today?" You ought to be able to respond

in one sentence, "Today, I will be teaching my class . . ." If you

think this is an unrealistic goal, I challenge you to ask your pastor

sometime, "What is the big idea of today's sermon?" Effective pastors

will not stutter in their reply, "Today, I will be preaching on . . ."

One pastor told me he asks his kids at Sunday lunch, "Ok, kids, what

was the big idea in today's sermon?" If they can give it to him, he

feels he has done pretty well. It is ok to chase a few rabbits, but

drive to a central, focused verdict.

The unexamined life is not worth living and the unexamined teacher is

not so good either. Evaluate yourself regularly on these criteria. On

the following page is an evaluation sheet. Make copies and evaluate

your self each week. If you are really brave, have your spouse or a

class member do the evaluation with you. The fastest way to grow a

class is to increase the effectiveness of the teaching. Every teacher

can improve. You can. I can. Even Chuck Swindoll can. If you are going

to double your class every two years or less, you have to teach a

half‑way decent lesson each and every week; nothing less will do.

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SELF‑EVALUATION

Rate yourself on a scale of one to ten with one being poor and ten

being excellent.

Passion. Did you present the truth with some conviction?

Practical. Did you give specific application that can be applied to

life this week? Did you teach for a verdict?

Humor. Were there points when the group laughed together?

Personal. Did you touch them where they live? Were you open about

where you are at?

Involvement. Was everyone interested and with you? Did you have a good

number of people participate in the discussion?

Preparation. Were you well prepared enough to present the lesson with

confidence?

Background. Did you bring some interesting background not evident from

the casual reading of the text.

Introduction. Did you grab their attention at the first?

Inspiration. Did you attempt to inspire them to do what you wanted

them to do?

Focus. Did you have one or two "big ideas" that you attempted to drive

home throughout the lesson?

Note: permission to copy granted.

http://www.joshhunt.com/ten.html

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Half‑Way Decent Lesson by Josh Hunt

- 4/2001.101

The Importance of a Half‑Way Decent Lesson

by Josh Hunt

Note: this is an excerpt from my book You Can Double Your Class in Two

Years or Less (Group 1997).

The number one variable in predicting the growth of a class is the

teaching ability of the teacher. If someone is not doing a good job

with the teaching. . .

No amount of outreach will be enough to grow a class, and

Disciples will not be made. We need quality teaching to make quality

disciples.

On the other hand, with quality teaching, groups seem to grow almost

automatically. Jesus attracted huge crowds. In part this was because

he was such a masterful teacher. Good outreach can accelerate the

growth even further, but we must have the base of good teaching in

order to grow a group. Notice I say, "good teaching"; it does not have

to be sensational.

I take great comfort from knowing that I do not have to hit home runs

with every lesson. I do need to hit singles regularly. If people are

not hearing something meaningful and applicable to them, you will not

keep them, no matter how often you invite. It does not have to be the

greatest lesson ever, but it does need to meet needs.

If you want a church to grow, somebody better be saying something

helpful in the pulpit. Nothing can replace good preaching. Would you

be attracted to a church that had a great program, spent a lot of

money on advertising, had nice music, but the preaching was lousy?

People will sometimes stay in a church like that if they have a strong

network of friends. They stay reluctantly. The same is true with small

groups. You can have all the parties and games and invitations you

need to get a crowd there. Guaranteed. But if someone is not saying

something helpful to the group, people will not come back. Good

advertising will never cover for a bad product. The label is

important, but sooner or later, it is what is in the bottle that

counts. Even if people do stay, they will not become disciples. It is

the truth that sets people free. We are transformed by the renewing of

our minds. Consequently, the disciple making process depends on

half‑way decent teaching.

Thom Rainer's research bears this out: "One significant study done by

and for mainline denominations found that in‑depth teaching and

preaching of orthodox Christian belief was the single best predictor

of church participation. Strong Sunday school and

scripturally‑authoritative preaching engendered long‑term health for

the church."(1) (Italics mine.)We must have half‑way decent teaching.

I have attended a number of church growth conferences. Speakers never

talk about the importance of preaching and teaching loudly enough.

Humility forbids them. Bill Hybels cannot stand up at his church

growth conference and say, "If you would just preach as well as I do,

growth would take care of itself." Yet when I hear Bill Hybels preach,

I know his preaching skill is a huge factor in Willowcreek's growth.

There is a reason they sell 300,000 tapes a year.

Some will object that I am not casting a high enough vision. Some have

told me that we should ask for better than half‑way decent teaching,

that we want excellent teaching. They want me to say that only

fantastic teaching will grow a class. There is no doubt that fantastic

teaching can certainly help, and in some sense, it is the goal. I want

you to teach as well as you possibly can. But I also want to lend

confidence to you if you are not Bill Hybels or Chuck Swindoll. You do

not have to be Chuck Swindoll to grow a class. I am trying, in this

chapter to walk a delicate balance of emphasizing the importance of

good teaching while, at the same time, lending confidence to the

teacher of average skill.

I have seen teachers who are so good that they can grow a class

without applying many of the principles in this book. But they are

rare. Can I be honest with you? You are probably not that good. But

you are probably good enough to grow a class. Good enough to double

that class every two years or less. Good enough to be used greatly by

God.

Consider fast food hamburgers. Do we eat fast food hamburgers because

we think they are the greatest hamburgers in the world? Would we give

them a 10 on a scale of one to 10? Would we even give them a soft 8? I

don't think so. I have asked groups all over the nation to rate fast

food hamburgers on a scale of one to ten. They usually get about a

four or five. That is half‑way decent. But half‑way decent hamburgers

are good enough to make them a phenomenon. The half‑way decent

hamburger is sold around the world with clean stores, good service and

good advertising. And half‑way decent lessons can be 'sold' with good

fellowships and outreach. But, they have to be at least half‑way

decent.

I had a teacher one time who was teaching on the passage that refers

to Judas as the "Son of perdition." The word means under condemnation.

This is the way the teacher approached the text. "Predestination. Who

really understands predestination. . .?" We have to do better than

that! First of all, the word is perdition, not predestination. Second,

you need to come up with something better than, "Who really

understands. . ." I have observed a lot of Sunday school teachers over

the years. Some of them are teaching on this level. We have to do

better than this if we are going to reach America for God through

groups that are doubling every two years or less.

If you can do better than half‑way decent, great. Strive for

excellence. But you need to hit at least a single just about every

time you come to the plate.(2) Central to the process of creating

disciples is creating good, solid, half‑way decent lessons each and

every week. Nothing less will do. I am working on a book that will

explore the craft of teaching in more detail. In the next chapter, we

will cover the highlights of good teaching in 10 essential qualities

of half‑way decent teaching.

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1. Thom Rainer, Giant Awakenings, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and

Holman, 1995), p. 177.

2. It is beyond the scope of this work to do an exhaustive treatment

of great teaching. For that, I recommend Bruce Wilkinson's The Seven

Laws of the Learner. It is available in both book and Video format,

and it is quite a bit better than half‑way decent. It is incredible.

http://www.joshhunt.com/half.html

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Creating Tension by Josh Hunt

- 4/2001.101

Creating Tension in Class

by Josh Hunt

This is an excerpt from Disciplemaking Teachers, (Group, Jan. 1998)

Have you ever noticed that it is nearly impossible to leave a movie

during its final five or ten minutes, but people gladly leave Sunday

school in the final five minutes to go sing in the choir? It never

seems to bother them. They almost seem happy to slip out early.

Why is this, and what does it have to do with great teaching? What do

great movies, great books, and great teaching have in common?

They all have cloud of "Who dun it?" hanging over. You can't leave

during the last five minutes of a movie because by that time you are

so involved, so worked up, so curious that you just can't leave.

Ever read a novel that you just couldn't put down? What are the

chances of getting to the final four or five pages and just wandering

off. It will never happen. If the author has done his job, there is an

atmosphere of suspense that will not let you go. It is that creative

tension that keeps you flipping pages until the very end.

No amount of special effects or cinematography or even great acting

will overcome a bad plot in a movie. A good plot keeps you guessing to

the final moment how the whole thing will work out. The writers build

in a problem that demands to be solved. We gotta know who dun it.

Good lessons are this way as well. Good teachers create more problems

than they can solve. That is what the light of the Word does: it

creates problems. We didn't know what the problems were when they were

in the dark. Our life was a messy garage with the light out. Now, with

the light on, we can see the problems plainly. Good teaching is not

just about solutions, it is about creating problems. Until the

problems are in the light, there can be no solutions.

Good teachers leave a little creative tension in the air the whole

hour. There is an atmosphere that you can almost touch that just

reaches out to you and says, "How is he going to explain this one?

What is the answer to this dilemma? How do I solve this mystery? What

is the solution?"

Mediocre teachers prefer to avoid tension at all costs. They like

everything settled, everything neat, everything as it should be. They

don't like any questions, any uncertainty. All is at peace. All is

quiet. All are bored.

Skilled is the teacher who can employ creative tension. People dare

not leave because they want to see how this whole thing shakes out.

Everyone keeps paying attention because they are curious. No one looks

at their watches. If they do, it is because the wonder how in the

world the teacher will bring this thing to closure in the time

remaining.

This is what makes a ball game exciting, isn't it? You are wondering

who will win. No matter how exciting the play by play, if you know the

outcome, the predictability makes it boring. Too many Sunday school

lessons are too predictable. We need an element of creative tension‑‑a

bit of "who‑dun‑it" in every lesson.

Here is an example of creative tension in practice. Suppose the text

for the day is - Philippians 1:6 - Philippians 1:6} "Being

confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it

on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." A teacher could

approach this text by simply explaining the meaning of all the

words‑‑the Greek for confident, the history behind good work, some

cross reference material on completion, and so on. Or, the teacher

could create some creative tension by asking: Whose job is it that we

grow to maturity in the faith: Ours? God's? The church's? The

pastor's?

Nine times out of ten people will answer that it is our job. Then read

the text to them and ask, "Then why does God say he will take on the

responsibility for our sanctification?" Get real quiet and let them

begin to chew. If they beat you to the punch and quote

- Philippians 1:6 - Philippians 1:6}, follow up by asking,

"Then what is our role in sanctification?" or, "Then is our role

strictly a passive one‑‑'let go and let God' as some put it? Let's

suppose this is true, that ours is a strictly passive role in

sanctification. Why does - Philippians 2:12 - Philippians

2:12} say to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? Does that

sound passive to you? What about these verses: (pass these out on

strips of paper or have individuals look them up.)

- Luke 13:24 - Luke 13:24} "Make every effort to enter through

the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will

not be able to.

- Romans 14:19 - Romans 14:19} Let us therefore make every

effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

- Hebrews 12:14 - Hebrews 12:14} Make every effort to live in

peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see

the Lord.

II Peter 3:14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to

this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace

with him.

"The Bible cannot contradict itself. So, why does Philippians teach

that God is bringing our salvation to completion while these verses

say we are to make every effort to move toward maturity?

Long pause. Make them struggle. Don't solve the problem; create the

problem and leave it with them. Make the problem as tough as you can:

"Look at - Hebrews 4:11 - Hebrews 4:11}. What are we to make

every effort to do in this verse? How do you make an effort to rest?"

Between each of these questions the teacher should pause and let the

group think. Let them discuss it. If the small group is not very

small, break them up into groups of four or five. Let a real dialogue

take place. Let them fight just a bit. Don't let it get ugly, but let

the discussion be real. Let some real creative tension develop. Let

them grapple with problems before you give them answers.

When they start to get settling on a conclusion, rattle them again.

Set - Hebrews 13:17 - Hebrews 13:17} before them:

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over

you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will

be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Then ask: "What are leaders responsible for? Doesn't this passage

teach that it is not God's responsibility, or our responsibility, but

the responsibility of those who are in leadership to bring us to

maturity? How do you fit this in?"

Be quiet, and let them chew on it. No one will look at their watches.

No one will yawn. No one will leave early for choir. You might make an

enemy of your choir leader, but so be it.

How not to do it

I contrast this method with a lesson my Dad tells me he heard one

time. The text was the story of the rich young ruler

( - Matthew 18:18 - Matthew 18:18} ff). A great passage to

create creative tension. The passage begs to stimulate controversy.

But not this day. Not this class. The teacher read the passage, then

explained, "Now, this passage, of course, doesn't really mean we

should give away everything. No. We should all tithe, of course, and

be willing to give a little extra from time to time, but God doesn't

expect all his children to give up everything to follow him. Why, that

would be works theology and we all know that isn't right."

Everyone one nodded in agreement. Everyone felt better. Another

discomforting passage of scripture successfully laid to rest. All was

at peace.

If I had been a student in class, I would have nailed to the wall. Why

does - Luke 13:33 - Luke 13:33} say, "In the same way, any of

you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

Then I'd be quiet and let them chew on it. If they came to an answer

too quickly, I would press them harder. Make them squirm. Make them

think. That is how disciples are made.

By the way, please note that the teacher's theology was orthodox. It

is generally believed that God does not expect every believer to give

away everything he owns. I have no quarrels with the teacher's

theology. But, there are far better ways to communicate this. I think

the rich young ruler squirmed and our students ought to squirm when

they talk about it.

Toward the end of the hour, you can release the tension in a simple

summary. You might say, "God may not want every believer to give away

everything. But, he certainly wants every believer to be willing to

give up everything. Sometimes he will come into our lives, place his

hand on something of value, and say, 'Do you love me more than this?'

We need to be willing to say yes. Let me ask you to bow your heads.

For the next 90 seconds, ask God this question, 'Is there anything

that I have withheld from you that you would ask of me? Anything of my

time? My talents? My treasure? I lay it all on the altar again. As

Abraham laid Isaac on the altar, I lay everything I have on the altar.

Do with my life what you will. I give complete control to you.'"

Unresolved tension

You might want to leave the group with the tension unresolved. Leave

them wondering. Leave them asking. Leave them talking. Study the

teaching style of Jesus. He left a lot of things unanswered. We want

everything to be tidy and neat.

Has anyone ever called you during the week and said, "Teacher, I have

been thinking all week about our lesson, and I think I have some

insight into it. Have you ever thought about. . . ?" When they do, you

will know that learning is taking place.

You might think that this approach will get old week after week. You

might think that after a while people will get used to this

tension/resolution cycle. You might think that after a while they will

not really involve themselves in the tension, knowing that a

resolution is certain. It seems like they might, but they don't.

I have a friend who is a western novel buff. After he curls up for a

weekend with a good western novel, his wife will ask him, "Well, did

the hero get the villain and ride off with girl?" He smiles and

echoes, "Yeah, the hero got the villain and rode off with the girl."

"Good." She squeezes his hand and smiles. All is as it should be. They

rode off into the sunset together. Next weekend, he will read another

good western novel. Gotta find out who dun it.

In the same way, creative tension in class never gets old. It is

effective week after week. If you want to double your group every two

years or less, employ creative tension in your teaching. It will help

you to be more than halfway decent.

http://www.joshhunt.com/tension.html

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Questions In Teaching - The Skillful Use of Questions In Teaching Adults by Josh Hunt

- 4/2001.101

The Skillful Use of Questions In Teaching Adults

by Josh Hunt

Home Page Articles Email Resume Support

This is an excerpt from Disciplemaking Teachers, (Group, Jan. 1998)

I am not absolutely convinced that asking questions is the only way to

accomplish the four things that must happen in the student for

disciplemaking to take place. Lectures and creative methods have their

place and can contribute. But, the truth is, leading discussions is by

far and away my favorite way to teach. I rarely speak more than a

paragraph without involving the group with a question. I really feel

it is the best way. I am so committed to asking questions as a way of

teaching I write 25 or so questions on the passage most of our groups

are studying each week. I have about half the Bible completed and hope

to publish them some day. There are a number of similar resources

already on the market, such as the Serendipity Bible. Let me mention

two or three kinds of questions I use. Here is the overview:

The Life Exposure Question

What Does the Text Say?

"How Did They Feel?" Questions

"Jump Ball" Questions

Application Questions

Accountability Questions

Testimony Questions: How Has It Worked So Far?

The Life Exposure Question (top)

I like to begin almost every class I teach with a kind of off‑the‑wall

question that just gets everyone mentally checked in, and allows the

group to get to know something about each other besides their view on

various Bible subjects. Some people think this is a waste of time, but

I think it is important. I am careful, however not to spend too much

time on it.

I often do this by having everyone introduce themselves and share some

silly thing, like. . .

Their favorite restaurant.

Their favorite recent movie.

Their favorite TV show.

One outdoor (or indoor, or spectator or participative or summer or

winter) sport they enjoy.

Their favorite way to spend a Saturday.

If they could live anywhere in the world, where would they choose?

Here is my favorite one:

If you had one life to waste, to absolutely blow on something totally

outrageous, what would you waste it on?

I have heard answers ranging from sky diving to traveling to

overdosing on drugs. It opens the window a bit into each person's

life. Here is the key thing: it gets everyone talking right up front.

It is hard to talk and not be paying attention. Getting everyone

saying something once early in the session will make it easier for

everyone to talk when we get to talking about things that matter. It

also allows people to identify people in the group with whom they have

some common interest. Part of what we are about in small group work is

cultivating relationships.

Sometimes I use more serious questions that in some way relate to the

text. If I am teaching on the fatherhood of God I might ask them to

share their name and, on a scale of one to ten, rate your relationship

with your father growing up. Or, if I am teaching on wisdom and

guidance, I might ask them to share one time they felt God helped them

with a decision. I try to be meaningful, but not so personal as to

embarrass anyone. I once asked a singles group to share their name and

how old the were when they first kissed someone other than family. One

girl shared she had never been kissed. Ouch. Don't ever ask questions

like that. Repent!

This first question may or may not have all that much to do with the

text. It just gets everyone mentally checked in and exposes the group

to each other in friendly way. The next question begins the exposure

to truth.

What Does the Text Say? (top)

My daddy used to say, "You gotta know what the Bible says before you

can know what it means." We often want to skip this. Maybe because we

are so familiar with the text we assume everyone is. Maybe we just

don't want to take the time.

It is safer to assume that many are fuzzy on at least the details of

the text and need to be reminded. Many people don't read well. Many

more don't read at all. We serve them by getting them thoroughly

acquainted with what the text says. If we are doing our outreach well

we will have a number of people who do not know the Bible well. It is

a shame for a teacher not to have a number of spiritual babies or lost

people in their class. Sometimes you hear comments that make you think

teachers are proud of how well the whole group knows the Bible and

grasps deep spiritual truths. It just means they are lousy at

outreach. Healthy groups have spiritual babies in them.

"What the text says" questions are good questions to draw out quiet,

shy, or introverted people. Just get them used to opening their mouth

in front of this group. I might call on a quiet person to look at a

specific verse and tell me one bit of information from that verse. You

can bet they will pay attention. Here are some examples, along with

the verses so you can really see how they work.

Jerry, who was the demon possessed man commanded to tell?

Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them

how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

( - Mark 5:19 - Mark 5:19})

Follow up question: what is the application? (This is asked to the

whole group.)

John, how does Paul describe what God has done to us in verse 21?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God. (II Corinthians 5:21)

Follow up question: how does it feel to you to say, "God has made me

to be the righteousness of God?" (From there I might ask questions

like:

Why does it feel awkward?

Is it true, or is this just hyperbole or God talk?

What difference would it make if we came to accept this on face value?

If I am the righteousness of God, why do I so often feel like a crumb?

If I am God's righteousness, why do I sin so much?

How could we come to take ownership of this truth so that our feelings

about ourselves were not so far from what the Bible says?

I might also throw in a short talk on how identity produces behavior.

Sarah, what is the job description of pastors and teachers in verses

11 and 12, and by implication, what is the job description of everyone

else? (This more complex question I would only ask to someone I knew

could handle it.)

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to

be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, To prepare God's

people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built

up. ( - Ephesians 4:11 - Ephesians 4:11},

- 12 - Ephesians 4:12})

Follow up questions: What do you think these works of service include?

What are some examples? What works of service have we been equipped

for and done in the last three weeks?

"How Did They Feel?" Questions (top)

In narrative material I have found it very helpful to look beyond the

text and what happened to the emotions they felt as the events took

place. Here are some examples:

Story Question

Prodigal son. How did the son feel as he approached the father near

the end of the story?

How did the father feel?

What was the elder brother feeling?

Abraham offering Isaac. What was Abraham thinking as he got up early

in the morning to take Isaac to be sacrificed? What was he feeling?

How do you think he felt when he saw the ram?

Nathan confronts David. As he was preparing to talk to David, what

was going through Nathan's head? How did he feel as he stepped to the

door?

How do you think David felt when Nathan said those dramatic words,

"You are the man."?

Paul's conflict with Barnabas over John Mark? Why did Barnabas feel

so strongly about keeping John Mark on the team?

What were Paul's feelings on the matter?

What do you think John Mark felt?

Was this a polite disagreement, or were they really angry? Do you

think they raised their voices?

When you ask emotion questions you are not just looking for one

answer. Many times we have mixed feelings‑‑that is, we are feeling a

variety of things. You might have several in mind and if the group

does not name an emotion you might just ask, "Do you think David felt

defensive or convicted?" (Maybe both, which makes it a good jump ball

question, which we will talk about next.)

So far we have looked at three types of question, can you remember

what they are?

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Question

What Does the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Say?

"How Did They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ?" Questions

"Jump Ball" Questions

Application Questions

Accountability Questions

Testimony Questions: How Has It Worked So Far?

Jump Ball Questions (top)

When I get into the heart of the lesson, I like to have a good jump

ball question. A jump ball question is a question that can

legitimately go either way. If I write the question well there will be

some who will answer the question one way, while others take the

opposite viewpoint. If I do this successfully, I just sit back and let

them wrestle it out for a while.

What I am trying to create is a discussion where I am a player, even

the most important player, but just a player still. This is very

different than many questions that are just a dialogue between the

teacher and one student at a time. I am trying to get the students to

interact with each other.

Here is an example of a good jump ball questions I have used. If you

teach a group, you might want to use this one the next time you are

together and see where it goes.

Is Christianity easy or hard?

As far as I am concerned, this question can be answered either way,

depending on what you mean. Experience will teach most people to

naturally react that it is difficult, and there are verses that point

in this direction. But, Jesus said, "For my yoke is easy and my burden

is light." ( - Matthew 11:30 - Matthew 11:30}). In my opinion,

Christianity is either easy or impossible. It is like good dancing. It

requires discipline and practice. But if you are struggling with it,

you are probably losing. It ought to look easy. There ought to be a

grace and a poise and a joy in it that makes it easy. This is why the

Puritans taught us that the chief end of man is to glorify God and

enjoy Him forever. Christianity is at its best when we enjoy it. Yet,

it demands everything. We must deny ourselves, take up our cross and

follow him. We must give up everything to be his disciple. So, in a

way it is easy and in a way it is hard. That is why this is a good

jump ball question.

Sometimes, the trajectory of a jump ball has to be altered slightly,

either because you miscalculated the release, or because of the mind

set of the group. For example, with the above example, you might have

a group that will land completely one way or the other. If this

happens, you take the other side.

Suppose they all say, "Christianity is hard." Ask: "What about the

verse that says, 'My yoke is easy.' What is the answer according to

that verse?" If they all say it is easy, I ask, "Is it always easy for

you?"

Sometimes I alter the trajectory just to push the discussion a little

farther, or in a new direction. Here is an example of a question I

used in two groups, and got completely different reactions. I had to

alter the trajectory of the jump ball question in order to create the

discussion. In order to launch the jump ball, I had to tell a story:

I was talking to a guy the other day and at a certain point in the

conversation I said to him, "You are saying to me that a sinner comes

to God and says, 'please help me quit sinning' and God might say to

him, 'no'." "That is exactly what I am saying," he replied. Reflect on

that for me? Is that true? How could it possibly be true?

After they discussed for a while, I altered the trajectory: "What

about with reference to knowing God‑‑could it ever be that someone

would come to God and ask to know Him and God would say, "no"?

The point of the first question was to impress the students with the

idea that it is possible to come to God and ask him for help in

dealing with sin and your motives be all wrong. It may be you have no

real interest in God, it is only that sin has become inconvenient. It

has messed up your life and you simply want a better life for you.

Maybe you have some habit or addiction that has gotten out of control

and you want God to do what Weight Watchers or AA could not do. In

this case you may not really be interested in God of the kingdom. God

becomes a Jeanne, another self‑help method. I have turned to tapes and

books and they didn't work; I want a better life so I turn to God. God

may say, "no".

In a similar way, it is possible to come to God asking him to know

him, and the motive be all wrong. Jesus said to Peter, "Peter, do you

love me more than these?" (I think he was speaking of the nets, not

the other disciples in - John 20 - John 20}.) I think that is

not just a question for Peter, but for everyman. Jesus points to the

various attractions in our life and says, "Do you love me more than

these?" It is possible to want to know God because we think that is

part of the good life as we define it. The question about Job is also

every man's question, "Will Job serve God for nothing?" Will you? Will

I? Or do we want to know him for what we will get out of it. There

comes a time in every believer's life when he does to us what he did

to Abraham when he says, "Take your son, your only son whom you love.

. . and sacrifice him."

This is an abbreviation of a 5 minute lecture I would give in class

after the mind has been opened with the jump ball question.

Application Questions (top)

Application is the point. As Howard Hendricks says, "We are not out to

make smarter sinners, but saints." Application is not something we

tack on the end of a good discussion. It is the point of the

discussion. In teaching at its best, all roads lead to application.

Every question, story, verse, illustration, example, lecture‑‑all of

it leads to application.

Application questions are pretty straightforward:

How can we apply this to our lives?

What difference would it make on Monday morning if we knew God?

Specifically, how do we go about enjoying God?

What advice would you give to a friend who did not see himself as the

righteousness of God, as II Corinthians 5:20 describes? (People are

often better at giving advice to a friend than they are telling

exactly how they would do something.)

What specific steps could we take to make this a reality in our day to

day lives?

What is one thing you could do for your spouse this week that would

demonstrate a servant's heart. Name something you were not already

going to do anyway.

The key to good application questions is their specificity. Resist

like the plague the temptation to be too grandiose. Talk about

specific things they can do this week.

People forget most of what they hear. They even forget a lot of what

they see and talk about (though the percentages go down). But we

remember a lot of what we do. If you can get the group to do one small

thing in application of the truth studied you greatly multiply the

chances of them permanently altering their life.

The other side of the application issue is that there is a lot more to

being a disciple than doing. There is being, feeling, knowing. If

people come to understand that God is all‑knowing, all‑powerful, wise,

immutable, transcendent, holy, loving, kind, etc, it will alter the

way they think, feel and live. In fact, you could argue that it would

not be possible to really be a maturing disciple without most of our

concepts about God being accurate. These are not always easy to apply.

The fact that I am thoroughly impressed by the fact that God is holy

is important. Application can come later. I just need to understand

something about God. We need to relax and not push for application

where it is not appropriate. We also need to be aware and push for it

every time we can.

Time to review. Let me hold you accountable for what you have learned.

How many of the questions we have talked about so far. How many types

of questions can you remember?

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"\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_" Questions

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Questions

Accountability Questions

Testimony Questions: How Has It Worked So Far?

Accountability Questions (top)

Open groups‑‑that is, groups that people can walk in on anytime‑‑have

an inherent limitation with reference to accountability. In a closed

group you can build some discipleship momentum so they know they will

be held accountable every week for their quiet time or scripture

memory or whatever. It is difficult to do this and be an inviting,

including, evangelistic group. Both kinds of groups‑‑accountability

and evangelistic‑‑can be used by God in the disciplemaking process.

Still, there can be accountability in open groups. The accountability,

however, needs to be short term. If I give an application this week

about having the world on our heart and praying for a missionary of a

country this week, I need to ask them about it the next. If I

challenge the group to memorize one verse this week, I need to hold

them accountable the next. People who are new to the group will not

feel they have come in on the middle of something. They will realize

this is an assignment just given last week, and if they come next

week, they will be right up to speed.

Another kind of accountability has to do with beliefs. Say we teach a

lesson on the idea that we are to enjoy God ( - Psalm

37:4 - Psalms 37:4 - - Philippians 3:1 - Philippians 3:1},

- 4:4 - Philippians 4:4}). I might ask the next week, "Did

anyone have any moments this week when you enjoyed God? Tell us about

it" Or, more simply, if I teach a lesson on the fatherhood of God, I

might ask the following week, "What did we say last week, is God more

like a policeman, or a father? Have you had a chance to think about

that the last week?"

In addition to accountability in class, the teacher should be pushing

for personal accountability between members outside of class. This

will be dealt with in more detail in a later section. (p. 134)

Are you up for another review?

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Question

What Does the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Say?

"How Did They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ?" Questions

"\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ " Questions

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Questions

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Questions

Testimony Questions: How Has It Worked So Far?

Testimony Questions: How Has It Worked So Far? (top)

Most people are more persuaded by the group than they are the truth.

That is why we facetiously ask our kids, "If all your friends jumped

in the fire, would you?" The ironic thing we seldom think about is

that the answer to that question is "yes" more often than we know.

Think about Jonestown. I have a guy in our church that was among the

first team of people to go to Guyana and investigate. He explained why

the early estimates of the number of dead were so low (about 300

verses about 900). They knew about how many people lived in the

commune, yet they did not see that many bodies. They assumed hundreds

of them had run away. That is a logical, because we think that is what

we would do. We would run into the jungle if someone asks us to drink

cyanide laced kool‑aid. We forget the pull of the crowd. What they did

not realize was that people took the cyanide and laid down on other

dead bodies to die, so that the dead were stacked three and four and

five deep. There is an incredible power in the influence of the group.

We often think of peer pressure as a teen issue. It is not. Peer

pressure effects everyone. The role of the teacher is to capitalize on

this fact in the disciplemaking process.

This is why testimonies are so valuable. Consider this, in nearly all

Sunday School classes there is a wide variety of maturity represented

in the people present. Rather than just telling everyone, for example,

that they ought to have a quiet time, why not allow three or four of

the people to share their story?

What does it mean to them?

What specifically do they do?

Where do they sit, what time, what are the details?

How did they get started?

Why do they do it?

What are the rewards?

These testimonies will be far more valuable than your persuasion.

People are persuaded by their friends. They do what they see their

friends doing. In almost any area of application you can ask for

testimonies of people who are doing it.

By the way, I have seen testimonies work the other way, and it is

disastrous. Suppose a group was holding one another accountable for

having a daily quiet time. The leader comes in and asks how the group

did this week. One pipes up, "I didn't do so well. Not a single day."

"Yeah, I didn't do any better." "Well, I read one day, but I didn't

get too much out of it." This teacher is in deep weeds.

Review (top)

What have we learned so far? See if you can recall the seven kinds of

questions we can use to teach a group.

http://www.joshhunt.com/question.html

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How to Speak with Authority - Gothard

- 5/2001.101

How to speak with authority

1. Speak with a good conscience.

‑ Guilt brings fear, distraction, distortion, wrong motives, and

failure.

I Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some

having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

‑ Guilt dims our eyes and eye contact.

‑ Guilt hides God's ways.

- Matthew 5:8 - Matthew 5:8} Blessed [are] the pure in

heart: for they shall see God.

2. Speak with scripture.

‑ Ultimate authority "Thus saith the Lord"

‑ "We have the mind of Christ."

I Corinthians 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he

may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

‑ Speak as the oracles of God.

I Peter 4:11 If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of

God; if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God

giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ,

to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

‑ "A discerner of thoughts"

- Hebrews 4:12 - Hebrews 4:12} For the word of God [is]

quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing

even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and

marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

3. Speak to the conscience.

‑ This was Paul's method.

II Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of

dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God

deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to

every man's conscience in the sight of God.

We can say "we have sinned," and then asked, "what will you do?"

You must ask permission to speak to their conscience. This will

reveal hidden things.

‑ Establish conviction with commandments.

‑ Investigate root problems.

- Acts 8:20 - Acts 8:20} But Peter said unto him, Thy money

perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may

be purchased with money.

- Acts 8:21 - Acts 8:21} Thou hast neither part nor lot in

this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

- Acts 8:22 - Acts 8:22} Repent therefore of this thy

wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be

forgiven thee.

- Acts 8:23 - Acts 8:23} For I perceive that thou art in the

gall of bitterness, and [in] the bond of iniquity.

Anything you hide in darkness, the devil is given authority over

this. [HEC ‑ He is the prince of darkness. You are living in his

dominion. Move out.]

Houdini developed his stomach muscles and said that anyone could hit

him and it wouldn't hurt. He forgot to say with his permission.

Someone hit him and he died from this.

This is bitterness, greed, and impurity.

4. Speak from experience.

‑ You speak with authority when you give your life message.

I - John 1:3 - John 1:3} That which we have seen and heard

declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and

truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ.

- John 9:25 - John 9:25} He answered and said, Whether he be

a sinner [or no], I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was

blind, now I see.

1. Describe a personal struggle ‑ (Like ‑ Fear)

2. Explain how you tried to solve it. ‑ (Bitterness.)

3. Present God's solution to it. ‑ (His Word.)

4. Report the results. ‑ (Peace)

Most people need help with this. Sometimes people try to share

someone else's testimony. Tell your story.

5. Speak with clear facts.

‑ Speak the truth in love.

- Ephesians 4:15 - Ephesians 4:15} But speaking the truth in

love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even]

Christ:

It's the idea of love versus harshness.

‑ Avoid unnecessary words that offend.

Don't use words that we do not need.

‑ Major on common words. (Beatitudes)

In the Beatitudes, 110 words of Jesus were one syllable words.

‑ Check accuracy. (Scopes trial)

Clearance Daryl, flattered William Jennings Bryant. Then he

reasoned, "You don't believe the story of Jonah swallowing the whale,

I mean the whale swallowing Jonah." Bryant said, "Well it said a

great fish." Daryl said, "Jesus said it was a whale." Bryant lost

favor with the people.

6. Speak with grace and "salt"

‑ Salt creates curiosity to know truth.

- Colossians 4:6 - Colossians 4:6} Let your speech [be]

alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to

answer every man.

Use curiosity to attract people. Jesus told a part of the story and

then the people followed to the next city.

‑ Grace motivates people to do God's will.

We have the desire and the power to do God's will.

Rewards versus a bribe. A reward is for doing good, a bride is for

doing bad. God is going to reward us.

- Psalms 1:3 - Psalms 1:3} And he shall be like a tree

planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his

season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall

prosper.

Bill offered $1.00 if these Russian people could quote this word

perfect. In these than two minutes, a little boy came and quoted.

Then a girl, then the principle raised her hand. He gave her $2.00.

‑ Appeal to the 7 motivational gifts. ( - Romans 12 - Romans

12})

To the teacher, document it, to the organizer, end on time.

‑ Require commitment to receive answers.

Some of you only want to be average Christians, that's fine, but

some of you want to be totally dedicated to God. You come at this

time. The more sure you are of your answers, the more commitment from

your hearers. This is why Jesus commanded full commitment.

7. Speak by the Holy Spirit. - Ephesians 6:19‑20 - Ephesians

6:19‑20

‑ Be filled with the Spirit

- Ephesians 5:19 - Ephesians 5:19} Speaking to yourselves in

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in

your heart to the Lord;

‑ Don't grieve or quench God's Spirit.

‑ Relate every experience to Scripture.

From the video "How to reach your city for Jesus." This was from the

brother from Argentina. (Ed Sevosia.)

When you are preaching, you are not only preaching to the people, but

you are preaching to the principalities in that area. We can't just

preach to them, we have to set them free. When we preach Christ and

the Cross, we have the power of God and then the wisdom of God. This

is why people are still doing horrible things. They say, "I am still

working on my salvation, but I'm saved." You may not know how to

explain it, "I was bound, but now I'm free." We must have power

first, then wisdom. "I was blind, but now I see." We need the power

of God so that the wisdom of God can take root.

Your enemies and my enemies do not have skin, it's satan. You are a

soldier. Sometimes you fire, sometimes you are fired on. Make a list

of 20 people who are not believers and pray for them everyday. Serve

eviction notices on the powers that have control of them.

Eviction notice, a man who dressed up nice and will deliver a piece

of paper. You don't move, then 12:01, the sheriff comes with a lot of

deputies and they start throwing everything out.

When we serve an eviction notice, it provides God with a legal means

to do this. It may seem to cost us nothing, but it cost Jesus

plenty. General Wainwright was the only General captured in WWII.

Can you picture this frail man walking with a cain. These well fed,

strong soldiers standing over him. No one told him that Japan

surrendered. An American soldier flew in and told the General. This

General walked into the commanders office, kicked the door in and

said, "My commander and chief has defeated your commander and chief,

I'm in charge here." It's not a matter of strength, it's authority.

You can not live in sin and fight the devil.

Bill Gothard, Bill Gothard Seminar

Atlanta, GA

April 24, 1992

Notes taken by H. E. Cardin

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6 Features of Good Sermons: Fred Craddock

- 12/2003.101

Fred Craddock lists six features of good sermons:

1) A unified theme that gives confidence to the preacher and clarity

to the listeners

2) A "memory" that sets the sermon within the tradition of the

believing community

3) A nod of recognition that precedes any shock of recognition

4) A quality of identification with human situation that draws in

listeners

5) A form that creates and sustains anticipation

6) An intimacy between speaker and hearer that is supported by an oral

tradition.

http://www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/resource\_detail.asp?resou

rce\_id=386

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CJ - Preparing to Hear

- 7/2004.101

SOUL JOURNEY

SATURDAY JUNE 26

- James 1:19‑21 - James 1:19‑21} 19 My dear brothers, take

note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and

slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the

righteous life that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral

filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the Word

planted in you, which can save you.

ARE YOU PREPARED? How do you prepare for work? How about for a date?

Do you have a specific preparation routine before you go to the gym?

How about when you wash clothes, shop for groceries, or plant a

garden? Preparation is essential for any area of life, especially if

we are going to have any kind of effectiveness.

The book of James reminds us of the importance of preparing to hear

from the God of the universe.

Open my ears‑‑be quick to listen. Having open ears means anticipating

that God has something to say that will have an impact on my emotions,

my thinking, and my will. Having open ears means that I will receive

what God has to say without a debate, a fight, or a prideful attitude.

Close my mouth‑‑slow to speak. Someone has quipped, "God has given us

one mouth and two ears so that we would listen twice as much as we

talk." We really can't hear from God when we are constantly talking.

Sometimes we should prepare to hear from God in silence.

Cool my head‑‑slow to become angry. Anger is an emotion that

constantly battles against God's Word and ultimately prevents the Word

from having its intended impact in our lives.

Clean my life‑‑get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so

prevalent and humbly accept the Word. Just as an infection impairs our

physical hearing, so sin blocks our spiritual ears, preventing us from

hearing what God has to say.

Your heart is like a precious garden. If left to itself, the soil will

produce only weeds‑‑materialism, worry, hatred, jealousy, envy, sexual

sins, harsh words, problems, and "being a know‑it‑all but practicing

none‑at‑all." These things choke out the effectiveness of God's Word.

Are you prepared to hear what God has to say to you? ‑‑Marvin

Williams

DESTINATION POINTS \* How much time do I spend preparing to hear from

God, and how can I do a better job preparing? \* Do I have any weeds

growing in the garden of my heart? \* What sins do I need to confess so

that God's Word can have its intended impact in my life?

LINKS: Tracking God

\webpage{http://www.christianitytoday.com/moi/2001/003/may/7.7.html

bottom line: Open ears start with an open heart for God.

Today's Soul Journey can be found at

\webpage{http://www.soul‑journey.org/20040626.php

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Sermons, ed. by Edwin Charles Dargan. NY: A. C. Armstrong and Son,

1898; or New and rev. ed. by Jesse Burton Weatherspoon. NY: Harper

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Hooks, Lines & Thinkers - How to Write Sermon Titles that Sizzle

- 11/2004.101

Hooks, Lines & Thinkers

How to Write Sermon Titles that Sizzle

By Brian Mavis, Site Manager, SermonCentral.com

A book was written and released with two different titles. Both

received identical marketing. One was called The Art of Courtship and

the other The Art of Kissing. Which would you buy? Kissing sold 60,500

copies, while Courtship only sold 17,500!

A book titled Compact Classics was not selling well. The book was

renamed with this provocative title, The Great American Bathroom Book.

The added subtitle was Single‑Sitting Summaries of All‑Time Great

Books. It went from an obscure reference book to a national best

seller within weeks. The demand was so great that they created an

entire book series.

A Virginia high school offered a class called Home Economics for

Boys and it generated little interest. The next year it was renamed

Bachelor Living. The result was tremendous: 120 boys eagerly

enrolled. The curriculum didn't change, but the image did.

When it comes to your weekly sermons, how do your titles fare? If you

re like most pastors, your sermon titles could probably use a little

flair and pizzazz. Even John Newton, who penned the most popular

Christian song ever, needed help. Amazing Grace is a fantastic

title, but he originally named it, Faiths Review and Expectation.

Yes, even this poet could blow a title. Here are ten ways to take your

sermon titles from average to outstanding.

1. HARNESS THE POWER OF POP CULTURE

Connect to what people are watching and talking about. For example, if

college football is hot in your community, come up with some

provocative titles, such as Making It to the Endzone, Time for a

Time Out?, Fourth Down and 30 to Go or Scoring a Touchdown in the

Game of Life.

2. PLAY WITH WORDS

I had written a sermon about Jacob wresting with God. My working title

was Jacob Wrestles with God. Pretty clever, huh? Then I changed it

to Fighting with God. Better. Then I called it How to Pick a Fight

with God and Win. This was even more provocative. Later, I thought

about a cultural event that could tie into my sermonthe Touched by

an Angel television show. Too mushy for me. But then I played with it

and came up with Punched by an Angel. I had it.

3. TURN CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON ITS HEAD

This is easy because so much of Gods wisdom goes against conventional

wisdom. How about Good People Dont Go to Heaven or God Helps Those

Who Cant Help Themselves. Try God Is a Divorcée and Wants to Be

Remarried to You or even Jesus Is Not a Good Teacher.

4. A CALL TO ACTION

Why wait until the actual sermon to give your application? Tell people

what God wants them to do in the title. Two examples are When

Wronged, Turn the Other Cheek and Pray for Someone Who Has Hurt

You. Someone may miss the point of your sermon, but he wont miss the

point in the title.

5. CHOOSE A TITLE FROM SCRIPTURE

There may be a great title hidden in the passage youre preaching. I

preached a sermon on how to renew our love from - Revelation

2:4‑5 - Revelation 2:4‑5}. The phrase Do the Things You Did at First

was so captivating that I used it as the title and as a refrain

throughout the sermon.

6. SPOTLIGHT THE BENEFITS

Why do people think that obeying God is such a drag? Change their

perception by highlighting the benefits of obeying God. Titles like

these highlight the benefits of obedience: Praying Will Bring You

Peace, Forgiveness Frees You From Bitterness or Sex Gods Way is

Safe, Satisfying and Sizzling.

7. SPECIFICALLY SPEAKING

Ironically, the more specific the sermon title, the wider and deeper

it can impact your listeners. Addiction is a poor title. Breaking

the Bonds of Addiction is a good title. But if you preach on Break

the Bonds of Lotto Fever, you just moved from vague helpfulness to

Were going to see what God has to say about this problem in todays

society.

8. HOPE SELLS

After experiencing grief, loss, unmet expectations, broken homes and

shattered dreams, many of us are looking for hope in life.

Straightforward, encouraging titles like these can be good medicine:

God Is Near the Brokenhearted, God Will Bring Good Out of Your

Suffering or God Has a Hope and Future for You.

9. THE POSITIVE SPIN

If your sermon identifies a problem, highlight the solution. For

example, instead of having a sermon called The Debt Trap, call it

Escape the Debt Trap.

10. BY THE NUMBERS

Something as simple as adding some numbers to your title can make it

more interesting. Instead of Ways to Tell Good from Evil, title it

5 Ways to Tell Good from Evil. Instead of Satans Temptations,

name it Satans Top 10.

So the next time youre searching for a sermon title, try one of these

tactics. Youll draw a crowd and keep them listening!

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Ultimate Preaching Rules

- 4/2005.101

Ultimate Preaching Rules ‑ Author Unknown

1 According to your congregation, there are bad sermons and short

sermons but there are no bad short sermons.

2 A life saver mint will last 22 minutes exactly if left laying

between the cheek and gum during the normal course of talking. This is

a helpful hint to time your sermon. Just don't make the mistake of

putting a button in your mouth instead of a life saver before you get

up to preach.

3 It never fails that when an "Awesome Sermon" is preached, members of

the congregation cannot remember the scripture citations or what the

sermon was about when the service is over.

4 When you reach a weak point in the sermon, raise the pitch and

volume of your voice to compensate.

5 Have the congregation stand for the last hymn before the message, to

assure everyone starts out awake.

6 Have a good opening. Have a good closing. The middle will take care

of itself if you quote enough scripture.

7 Every good sermon must contain two good parables and a scripture, or

two good scriptures and a parable.

8 The number of faithful tithers in a congregation, and the amount in

the offering plate is in direct inverse proportion to the number of

sermons the pastor delivers on stewardship and tithing.

9 The likelihood that someone will walk down the isle drops by a value

of 10 percent for each minute the sermon goes into overtime.

10 The louder the congregation sings the longer the preacher should

preach.

11 It is a well kept secret among Music Ministers that the offering

total goes up 5 percent each time the third verse of a hymn is skipped

(so, that's why they do that).

12 Contributions to "special" or "dedicated" funds go up and

contributions to the "general" fund go down in direct proportion to

the pastors popularity.

13 Almost everyone is capable of being a Pharisee from time to time.

14 The purpose of a great sermon is to comfort the afflicted, and

afflict the comfortable. The latter is preferable to the former.

15 No matter how hard you have studied and prayed, some sermons seem

to barely get out of your mouth before they drop on the floor in front

of the first pew.

16 Whatever scripture you quote and whatever your sermon outline,

remember that your verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.

17 If you wear a big shinny watch, when the congregation starts to

doze off you can wake them up by catching light from the back window

and reflecting it into their eyes (with a little practice). For extra

amusement with some additional skill you can get an extra bounce off

of bald heads.

18 When the congregation starts to lose interest and doze off you can

awaken them by saying loudly, "And Finally" or "In Conclusion." This

will only work about four times per sermon.

19 A good sermon should NEVER generalize.

20 No matter how hard you may try, sometimes a scripture just will not

fit in the sermon you wanted to use it in.

21 Analogies in a sermon sometimes fit like feathers on a snake.

22 Murphy must have been a preacher, but at least he was an optimist.

23 When you lose your place in your sermon notes, a well placed prayer

can help distract the congregation and give you time to get things

back on track.

24 If you have repeated yourself more than three times in a given

sermon it is time to quit.

25 Have a good opening point. Have a good closing point. Keep the two

as close together as possible.

26 The quality of a sermon can be judged first by the number of people

who walk the isle, and second by the number of people who are willing

to stand in line for 15 minutes after the service to shake hands with

the preacher and tell him what a great sermon he preached.

27 You can judge the length of your sermon by the length of response

from your SPOUSE to the question, "How was my sermon, honey?"

Examples: "Fine" means Way too long." "It was okay" Means A bit

lengthy." "It was really good this week ‑ I gained a blessing dear!"

28 means Just about right.

29 If you're going to preach on Sunday morning, do not eat onions on

Saturday night.

30 Take advice from the rooster. One day, a hen expressed the ultimate

ambition of her life, which was to lay an egg in the middle of a busy

expressway. So the rooster took her there. When they got to the edge

of the road, and traffic was whizzing by, the rooster gave her this

advice: "All right now! Make it quick, and lay it on the line!"

31 You know your sermon is not connecting when the choir begins their

final number and you haven't reached your last point yet!

32 Always remember, those nods of agreement from our silvery‑haired

friends may just be nods!

33 A good sermon is similar to a good sandwich. It has two ends: the

bread, and lots of meat in the middle. However, unlike a sandwich, the

two ends of a good sermon should be as close together as possible.

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Humor for Semi‑professional Speakers?

Humor for Semi‑professional

- 8/2005.101

HUMOR FOR SEMI‑PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS?

Attitude

One of the secrets of life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling

blocks.

Jack Penn

Accountants

Old accountants never die. They just lose their balance.

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How is your daughter doing in accounting class?

Great. Now instead of asking us for her allowance. She bills us for it

Adam and Eve

Adam was created before Eve so that he would have a chance to learn

how to speak.

Alzheimer's

After an extensive battery of tests, a guy meets with his doctor to

discuss the results.

"I'm afraid I have two pieces of rather bad news," says the doctor,

"First, you have inoperable cancer."

"Oh my god," says the patient, "what's the second piece of bad news?"

"You have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's," says the doc

sympathetically.

"Well," responds the guy, "at least it's not cancer!"

Ambition

"I knew I was an unwanted child when I saw my bath toys were a radio

and a toaster."

‑‑Joan Rivers

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Baby Sitters

A baby‑sitter is a teenager acting like an adult while the adults are

out acting like teenagers.

Bribery

After watching sales falling off for three straight months at Kentucky

Fried

Chicken, the Colonel calls up the Pope and asks for a favor.

The Pope says, "What can I do?

The Colonel says, "I need you to change the daily prayer from, 'Give

us This day our daily bread' to 'Give us this day our daily chicken'.

If you do it

I'll donate 10 Million Dollars to the Vatican."

The Pope replies, "I am sorry. That is the Lord's prayer and I can not

change the words."

So the Colonel hangs up. After another month of dismal sales, the

Colonel panics, and calls again.

"Listen your Excellency. I really need your help. I'll give you $50

million dollars if you change the words of the daily prayer from 'Give

us this day our daily bread' to 'Give us this day our daily chicken.'"

And the Pope responds, "It is very tempting, Colonel Sanders. The

church could do a lot of good with that much money. It would help us

support many charities. But, again, I must decline. It is the Lord's

prayer, and I can't change the words."

So the Colonel gives up again. After two more months of terrible sales

the Colonel gets desperate. "This is my final offer, your Excellency.

If you change the words of the daily prayer from, 'Give us this day

our daily bread' to 'Give us this day our daily chicken' I will donate

$100 million to the Vatican."

The Pope replies, "Let me get back to you."

So the next day, the Pope calls together all of his bishops and he

says, "I have some good news and I have some bad news. The good news

is that KFC is going to donate $100 million to the Vatican."

The bishops rejoice at the news. Then one asks about the bad news.

The Pope replies, "The bad news is that we lost the Wonder Bread

account."

Bureacrats

"Hell hath no fury like a bureaucrat scorned." ‑‑Milton Friedman

Cake

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire

in the craft it sank proving once and for all that YOU CAN'T HAVE YOUR

KAYAK AND HEAT IT, TOO.

Comedy

When you cut your finger, that's a tragedy. When you fall down a man

hole and die, that's a comedy".

~ Mel Brooks

Discretion

"Discretion is being able to raise your eyebrow instead of your

voice." ‑‑Unknown

Dyslexia

A man with dyslexia walks into a bra!

Foreign Languages

A flock of sheep are grazing in a field, happily going "baa baa" to

each other and discussing life as usual when suddenly they hear a "moo

mooooooooooooooooooo!"

They look around and see only sheep. They carry on grazing as before.

"Moooooo mooooooooooo mmmoo!"

One sheep can hear it all too clearly next to him. He shuffles away a

little from his friend, a worried look on his face and then asks

"George, why are you mooing. Your a sheep. Sheep go 'baa!'"

His friend replies gladly: " I know, I thought I would learn a foreign

language!"

Friendship

"The only way to have a friend is to be one." ‑‑Ralph Waldo Emerson

God

A young woman brings home her fiancee to meet her parents.

After dinner, her mother tells her father to find out about the young

man. The father invites the fiancée to his study for a drink.

"So what are your plans?" the father asks the young man.

"I am a Torah scholar," he replies.

"A Torah scholar. Hmmm," the father says. "Admirable, but what will

you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in, as she's

accustomed to?"

"I will study," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she

deserves?" asks the father.

"I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replies, "God will

provide for us."

"And children?" asks the father. "How will you support children?"

"Don't worry, sir, God will provide," replies the fiancé.

The conversation proceeds like this, and each time the father

questions, the young idealist insists that God will provide.

Later, the mother asks, "How did it go, Honey?"

The father answers, "He has no job and no plans, but the good news is

he thinks I'm God."

Hairdressers

Psychologists with scissors

Happiness

Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go."

‑‑Oscar Wilde

Heart

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or

even touched ‑‑ they must be felt with the heart." ‑‑Hellen Keller

Internal Revenue

A businessman on his deathbed called his friend and said, "Bill, I

want you to promise me that when I die, you will have my remains

cremated."

"And what," his friend asked, "do you want me to do with your ashes?"

The businessman said, "Just put them in an envelope and mail them to

the Internal Revenue Service.

Write on the envelope, 'Now, you have everything .'"

Jewish Holidays

Short summary of every Jewish Holiday:

They tried to kill us, we won, let's eat.

Motza

A Jewish man took his Passover lunch to eat outside in the park. He

sat down on a bench and began eating. Since Jews do not eat leavened

bread during the eight day holiday, he was eating Matzoh, a flat

crunchy unleavened bread that has dozens of perforations.

A little while later a blind man came by and sat down next to him.

Feeling neighborly, the Jewish man passed a sheet of matzo to the

blind man.

The blind man handled the matzo for a few minutes, looked puzzled, and

finally exclaimed, "Who wrote this crap?"

Originality

In truth there are only five jokes in the world, God made one a day.

On the sixth day he made man.

Put Down lines for disruptive audience members

Did you have a troubled childhood?

Everyone is entitled to be stupid but you're abusing the privilege.

Man, it may just be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve

as a warning to others.

Religion

Sometimes we turn to God when our foundations are shaking, only to

find out it is God who is shaking them.

Revenge

In a city park stood two statues, one female and the other male.

These two statues faced each other for many years.

Early one morning an angel appeared before the statues and said,

Since the two of you have been exemplary statues and have brought

enjoyment to many people, I am giving you your greatest wish. I hereby

give you the gift of life. You have 30 minutes to do whatever you

desire.

And with that command, the statues came to life.

The two statues smiled at each other, ran toward some nearby woods and

dove behind a couple of bushes. The angel smiled to himself as he

listened to the two statues giggling, bushes rustling and twigs

snapping.

After fifteen minutes, the two statues emerged from the bushes,

satisfied and smiling.

Puzzled, the angel looked at his watch and asked the statues, You

still have fifteen minutes. Would you like to continue?

The male statue looked at the female and asked, Do you want to do it

again?

Smiling, the female statue said, Sure. But this time YOU hold the

pigeon down and Ill poop on its head.

Self Confidence

"Self confidence comes not from always being right, but from not

fearing to be wrong."

Senility

George Bush was campaigning at a old age retirement home.

He went up to a woman and shook her hand and said "Do you know who I

am?"

"No," replied the old woman, "but if you go to the front desk, they'll

tell you!"

Smoking

Warning: Smoking can seriously lead to statistics

Speeches

I was always told that a good speech should have a good beginning

middle and end. I would add that the nearer these three elements are

the better

‑‑‑‑

If you can't convince them, confuse them. ~ Harry S. Truman

Tax

Everything we have is taxed ‑ even our patience.

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Why Jesus Used Stories - George Temple

Preaching

Why Jesus Used Stories ... an

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Why Jesus Used Stories ... and Why You Should Too

George Temple, Sermonspice

Jesus realized the power of telling stories when He taught and

communicated with others. Using illustrations is just as powerful

today. We live in an entertainment driven culture, spending billions

on movies, DVDs, theater, music, and other entertainment.

If our culture is willing to spend so much money to watch visual

stories (i.e. movies, etc.), then shouldn't the church be investing in

communicating this way? As a pastor or group leader, sermon

illustrations bring to life the truth you are seeking to communicate.

Why do we need videos in church?

Churches are a part of the culture we live in. Illustration videos

play an important role in your church or group, providing not only an

excellent visual tool to help communicate a life‑changing message, but

to provoke thought, inspiration, and understanding, with an approach

that's entertaining.

Every church has its own unique qualities or "personality" if you

will. Videos can be used to enhance this uniqueness, and can be used

in a variety of different settings and groups to serve many different

purposes.

There are a multitude of topics ranging from marriage, Jesus'

teachings, the Holy Spirit, stewardship to cults. Working with

hundreds of churches every week, I see one of the most effective ways

ministers use videos is to support a theme or provide an illustration.

Karen Donovan and her husband, Pastor Joe, lead the people at West Bay

Community Church, a new church with a small but growing congregation

in Largo, Florida.

"We use videos to reach as many people as we can in every way we can,"

says Karen. "Some of them have incredible production values yet others

may have a more homemade look. I use them both. Different situations

require a different approach."

Pastor Rick Rocco of Frontline Christian Church, a new

non‑denominational church plant in Hamden, Connecticut explains, "I

didn't realize that when I stumbled across that first downloadable

short video, my entire ministry would change. I run two separate types

of services, one family worship service on Sunday and one Emerging

Church on Monday night...we use videos for both. My congregation is

excited and is retaining more of the Word because of video tools."

Here are more examples: The video Rush, by Golden Lamb is a fast paced

vignette documenting a businessman's busy schedule from dawn to dusk.

It poses the question; is the rush worth it? A parenting video called

Fatherhood by Stewart Redwine takes a humorous look at how parents can

make mountains out of molehills in their children's lives. And, in an

artistic interpretation The Stations, Ghislaine Howard's paintings

cause us to do more than wait. Her stark images will help your

congregation enter into the reality and the horror of Christ's agony.

In addition to supporting sermon themes and illustrations, videos can

be used to show a compelling testimony, add humor, or as a closer.

"With the advent of video in mainstream church ministry, we have seen

a dramatic increase in our sermon effectiveness as well as the

tremendous impact that a carefully crafted video illustration or video

vignette brings to the service setting," says Pastor Steve Mohr, who

leads a post‑modern church of 350 plus in the Assemblies of God

denomination in rural Seattle. "We use [video] materials for a

welcome/greeting transition; humorous interludes, as well as serious

media to set up the message or to enhance a point of the message."

One area where we have seen explosive growth is in the use of videos

for worship. In the video Galaxy, by Highway Video, the producers

created compelling images of the universe with graphics and animation.

Visual metaphors are used along with worship music to usher in an

extraordinary worship experience.

Pastor Scott Keller of Skyline Community Church in O'Fallon, Illinois

states, "[Videos] have provided our creative team with fresh ideas,

such as using a video along with our own praise band to play live over

the video. It looked like we had spent hours putting it together and

it made a huge impact."

There are numerous videos to support virtually every category topic.

What touches an individual? It may be the music, the words on the

screen, or the story itself. Whatever part of the service they are

used, videos can enhance our experience with God, help drive home the

message we are trying to communicate, and add impact and effectiveness

to the church experience.

With the excellent media sources available today, I encourage you to

go beyond the "normal" routine, and try adding a new video component

to your service. You may be surprised at the results.

George Temple is President of Sermonspice, located in Fresno, CA ‑

www.sermonspice.com

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3 Legs of Preaching

- 10/2005.101

3 Legs of Preaching

Three Legs of Preaching

A balanced message is theological, biblical, and practical. An interview with Randy Frazee.

Randy Frazee

Topics: Doctrine; Leadership; Logic; Planning; Preparation;

Relevance; Series; Subjects; Workshop

Preaching Today: In every sermon you preach, you strive to have what

you call the three legs of preaching. What are they?

Randy Frazee: The three legs are simple theological, biblical, and

practical. I'm trying to present a message that's balanced not just

balanced in terms of preparing or crafting a sermon, but balanced for

the listeners, the people you hope to be transformed into

Christlikeness.

What we've done, first of all, is define what we believe are the core

components of a Christian life. We call it the Christian Life Profile.

It is made of ten core beliefs that we see are the predominant themes

of the Scripture, and that should make up the way in which a believer

thinks about the Bible and about life. These are ten core practices,

as we read Genesis through Revelation, and particularly the New

Testament, that the believer is to engage in.

Spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual disciplines, exactly right. We have a set of beliefs that

renew our minds, and a set of practices that we put into play, and

then finally a set of ten virtues, what God wants us to become. So it

is a know, do, be structure.

We have also resurrected the idea of a church calendar. Instead of a

church calendar built around doctrinal beliefs, to separate correct

biblical ideas from heresy, we've created what we call " the spiritual

formation calendar " where we place all 30 theological ideas in a

calendar. We deal with the first core belief in January, and we deal

with the final core virtue in December. We've been doing that for

three years. We see a language of spiritual formation beginning to

emerge in our congregation. People are not only talking about how a

particular sermon hit them on a particular Sunday, but they're

beginning to see how it fits in the overall scheme of things in terms

of living.

Talk in depth about the first leg.

The first is the theological leg. It means to present an operating

system for life. That requires the pastor to ask himself some

questions. If the pastor gave a sermon on , that suggests Christ is to

be formed in us. As a pastor and church we're going to work hard to

see Christ formed in us. If a visitor said, " I'm excited about that.

What might I expect? " I think the pastor would often step back and

say, " Well, I don't know what to tell you. "

Here's where the preacher needs to become crystal clear in scope and

sequence of what to work on. The preacher says, " While the Bible is

made up of more than these topics or subtopics, we're going to lay out

the core beliefs, the core practices, and the core virtues. And we're

going to work hard to get those things working in your life. " That's

the theological perspective.

We created a calendar to insure we have balance in our theological

perspective.

For example, in the first decade of my ministry, I would pick out

popular texts that I thought would work for the congregation either

from a practical or preaching perspective. What I've come to discover

is I have an obligation to the congregation to speak on subjects that

may not be culturally attractive, but critical to making the Christian

life work subjects like biblical community and the nature of the

church and God's desire for the church. In the individualistic world

we live in most people aren't that interested in the idea of the

corporate church, but I've got to teach on it. Going through the

spiritual formation calendar every year requires that I present

balance in speaking to subjects that our people need to hear.

What are the ten core beliefs?

The ten core beliefs are

The Trinity

Salvation by grace

Authority of the Bible

Personal God

Identity in Christ

Belief in the church

God's view of humanity

Compassion

Eternity

Stewardship

The ten practices are

Worship

Prayer

Bible study

Single mindedness

Biblical community

Giving away my time

Giving away my faith

Giving away my life

Giving away my money

Spiritual gifts

The virtues are things we're pursuing to become. Essentially they are

the fruit of the Spirit. They are

Joy and peace

Self‑control

Faith, and faithfulness

Humility

Love

Patience

Gentleness

Kindness

Goodness

Hope

We have gone back in church history and found how earlier Christians

dealt with the burden of transferring Christian living to the people

in a congregation. The church created creeds. So for each of these 30

ideas we created a creed we recite on Sunday. We've created banners.

We put them everywhere. So while we're a contemporary church, we have

found a new need for creeds.

For example, we are trying to create an understanding of what the

Trinity is. And so our people memorize, " I believe the God of the

Bible is the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit " ().

Let's go to the second leg.

The second leg is the biblical. Hearers probably have been trained the

most in this particular category. But I'd like to suggest we take a

fresh look at it. By biblical, we are suggesting that each sermon must

be rooted in a specific biblical text, and the message of that text in

its historical and literary context must be maintained, so that what

we proclaim is not just workable but profound and revelatory.

So it is true exposition of that text.

It's true exposition of the text. Now, at our church we don't

necessarily go through a book verse by verse. When we deal with a

specific text, we deal with it in its historical, literary context to

extract the actual message of the text.

The reason that's important is as a contemporary church we are taught

to be practical, which is the third leg. One of the temptations of

being practical is not to be biblical. We desire to scratch where

people itch. We know they scratch in the area of failure in their

marriage the struggle of raising children, with finances, with desires

to set goals in the areas of success for their career, with the desire

to have meaningful relationships, or a happy life. So we in the

contemporary church do all these practical series where people itch.

But the solutions we give are often not rooted in the historical text

of Scripture. At the end of the day the preachers who are overtly

practical but not careful to be biblical will find they have developed

a large crowd, but they're not profound in giving them solutions to

life.

For example, it's possible a pastor would give a sermon on marriage

communication, because the vast majority of people in his congregation

are struggling to communicate in marriage. What he or she proceeds to

do is lay out a series of practical things you could find in a

self‑help book. For example, before you speak, hold your breath and

count to ten. That's a practical suggestion, but Scripture offers more

than just teaching people how to contain the darkness within them.

Scripture offers, in an encounter with Jesus Christ through the Holy

Spirit, an opportunity to remove the darkness and to develop the fruit

of the Spirit. You can say to a married couple, " If you really come

to know Christ, we can teach you, as you develop a relationship with

Christ, how joy and gentleness will emerge in your life. When Jesus

said you need to turn the other cheek when someone insults you, he

wasn't suggesting that you turn the other cheek in anger. He is

suggesting that there should be no retaliation in your heart.

Therefore, you can gladly turn the other cheek because you have no

insult to return. "

That's the profound truth of Scripture. Practical preaching is

absolutely central. It's one of the major legs in the stool, but one

of the dangers of practical preaching is we speak a lot from the book

of Proverbs or we use a lot of text but do not provide profound truth

that comes from the Word of God. Therefore, I don't think it's as life

changing as it would be if the message was rooted in the text.

Let's go then to the practical leg of preaching.

The practical leg of preaching is to take a theological idea grounded

in a biblical text and address it in a way that touches your audience.

This would be the burden of the preacher if you lived in 1980 or 1990

or 2090. We must speak to the culture we are working with. So we have

to find creative ways to do that.

I'll give you a couple of examples. We want to do a series on some of

the core virtues in our theological model love, patience,

gentleness, and kindness. That's a theological construction, the

operating system we want our people to get. Every year we are going to

speak on those topics. This year, however, we're going to look at the

life of David in the Psalms and in First and Second Samuel. We will

cover his life biographically in the text to show how David or the

people in David's life either demonstrated or failed to demonstrate

the core virtues. So we put together a series practically entitled "

How to Really Love Someone. " This is a subject our people are

interested in. They're not only interested in how can they really love

someone, but they're interested in receiving that kind of love from

someone else. That's starting where people are at.

We dealt with the core virtues. We dealt with them in a biblical way

because each message was rooted in a specific text that dealt with

David's life. So, for example, when we came to the issue of

gentleness, we looked at the life of David in his encounter with

Abigail and Nabal. It's a fascinating study on gentleness from all

three characters. So in that series we were able to accomplish a

balance in this three‑legged stool.

If I want to preach with those three legs of the stool, how do I

approach sermon preparation? Do you take a certain leg first?

We start with the theological because that's what drives what we're

going to speak on. We have the calendar. I know in the first three

weeks of every year I'm going to be talking about the Trinity

Father, Son, Holy Spirit some aspect of God. It may be the person of

the Father, the person of the Son, the person of the Holy Spirit, the

works of God, the attributes of God, the decrees of God. Over the

course of the year I'm going to spend at least three weeks talking

about some aspect of God.

Then that determines what text you're going to choose.

That's exactly right. Each year we highlight a different aspect. For

example, one year we did a series on the existence of God. The next

year we did a series on the power of the work of the Holy Spirit in

bringing transformation to our lives. Last year we did a series on the

attribute of God's goodness in the face of trial. Each year we're

bringing out a different aspect rooted in a different biblical text.

We'll sit in a creative session and say, " Okay, we know we're dealing

with the Trinity. Which aspect of the Trinity do our people need to

hear this year? Where are they at? " We might determine our people

have experienced a lot of tragedy, and they are questioning God's

goodness. " Let's deal with the attribute of God's goodness. " Then

we'll say, " Where in Scripture will we teach this idea? " You can

obviously teach out of the Book of Job. We chose to look at some of

the Psalms as well as the Writings of Paul and his experience with

pain, and the healing of the blind man, when it appeared as though God

came through for somebody in the midst of tragedy. So the biblical leg

comes second.

The final leg is the practical. We brainstorm. For example, we're in a

series on the core practice of biblical community. Our creed says, " I

fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my

life, in other's lives, and in the world. " This year we wanted to

talk about the value of inter‑generational community and the need for

accountability in community. A major issue to be addressed in the

twenty‑first century is individualism. It seeks to pawn itself off as

community when it is really nothing more than a collection of

individuals in a room. That's the major problem with American small

groups right now. So we wanted to address this subject in a

straightforward manner .

We decided to go to the Book of Titus. In and the apostle Paul

addresses the topics of older women instructing the younger women, and

he says Titus is to hold them accountable, to encourage them and

rebuke them in sound doctrines. We did a two‑week series. We wanted to

capture that practically for people, and so we called the series "

Survivors " off the popular hit show, and we called it " Winning

Immunity through Community. " We showed the contrast of Christian

concepts of surviving through community versus the contemporary show

which said you vote each other off the island. With all that in mind

we were able to accomplish that three‑legged balance.

This article is a transcript from Preaching Today audio #209.

\webpage{http://preachingtoday.com/16687

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Potholes And Pitfalls For Young Preachers - Bruce McAllister

Today's Christian Preacher

- 12/2005.101

Potholes And Pitfalls For Young Preachers

Bruce McAllister, Today's Christian Preacher

How shocking to suddenly strike a deep pothole while driving! How much

more stunning to run onto the shoulder of the road and lose control of

the car! The lack of alertness or focus can lead to great harm while

one is driving.

Potholes and pitfalls may also bring much damage to young ministers.

In the pastoral epistles Paul warns Timothy about these dangers. These

warnings match observations I have made throughout years of service to

churches.

Improper motives:

Paul tells Timothy that "the end of the commandment is charity out of

a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I

Timothy 1:5). The compelling goal of ministry is to lead people to

love God and others. However, the man not driven by this goal may feel

compelled to prove himself, to take control, to display his newly

gained seminary knowledge, or to "make things happen." Wrong motives

underlie many destructive patterns of behavior among ministers.

Harshness, impatience, dishonesty, and arrogance may develop because

we forget our goal in ministry.

Immaturity:

Paul enjoins his younger comrade, "Let no man despise thy youth, but

be thou an example of the believer" (I Timothy 4:12). The younger

preacher is to give no occasion for older people in the congregation

to deprecate his leadership due to his unwise, youthful behavior.

While believers usually welcome the leadership of a young man of God

and are willing to allow for his growth and development, they are

sometimes appalled at the attitudes and actions taken by the young

man. His speech, behavior, and inner character should befit a shepherd

of God's flock. It seems that God often provides an older, gracious,

Christlike man within the congregation to remind the pastor by example

how he should conduct himself.

Intimidation:

Paul urges Timothy to "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee. . .

. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of

love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:6, 7). Perhaps Timothy was

timid. Paul was easily assertive, but not every God‑called man is at

ease with the necessary duties of the ministry. It is difficult to

confront the backslider, counsel the confused, comfort the grieving,

and motivate the stagnant. The complexities of modern ministry make

demands for which young men of God are not fully prepared. Some just

feel overwhelmed and apprehensive. Yet fear clearly does not come from

God. How the young man needs to draw upon the resources of God's

power, love, and truth!

Indiscretion and immorality:

"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity,

peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II

Timothy 2:22). The sinful desires of youth last a lifetime. Young

people wrestle with the pull of strong desires. Nonetheless, by God's

grace Christians are to refrain from giving in to these passions. This

is all the more true for pastors and evangelists. The young man must

be extremely careful in his relationship with women. The appearance of

indiscretion is almost as damaging to one's testimony as the very act

of immorality.

The pastor must avoid inappropriate touching, intimate conversation,

or having frequent fellowship with a woman other than his wife. Build

careful ministry and marital guidelines to protect yourself from the

snares of Satan and the flesh. You cannot be too careful. Delegate the

counseling of women to your wife or other godly women in the church.

Insolence:

The young preacher should memorize this passage: "And the servant of

the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach,

patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (II

Timothy 2:24, 25). Some men love a fight. However, the propensity to

fight is not godly but carnal. And fighting in the flesh is weakness.

So Paul reminds us that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,

but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (II

Corinthians 10:4)

Pugnacious young men may have acquired their contentious spirits by

attending a preachers' conference where "hotshots" and "hotheads" led

the services to the shouts and cheers of other preachers. But God's

man will be strong in spirit, courageous in stand, and Christlike in

his control. The power of God's Spirit needs no accompanying display

of a man's youthful arrogance or brashness.

Insubordination:

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father" (I Timothy 5:1).

Most young preachers start their ministries by serving under an older,

seasoned pastor. The Bible underscores the wisdom of such a practice.

Unfortunately, the great lessons offered by the journeyman‑pastor are

too often overlooked by his apprentice. Worse, the younger staff

member may actually be disappointed or even disaffected from his

ministry calling. Frustration and anger may build (sometimes in both

parties) until harsh words flow. The young man must keep before him

the channel of proper appeal to the older man, intreating him as a

father.

There is a proper manner in which to seek clarification, express

concerns, and raise appropriate questions with one's mentoring pastor.

One can hope that the pastor will keep this channel of discussion open

for the young man. But, whatever the case, there is no place for

disrespect, disregarding instructions, or deliberate disobedience. The

young man who ignores this advice will not only lose his current

ministry but many opportunities for future service.

Insatiableness:

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into

many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and

perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while

some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee

these things" (I Timothy 6:9‑11). Some pastors are never satisfied.

They demand big salaries, top benefits, and the latest car.

They conduct themselves in the extravagant lifestyle of corporate

executives. Younger pastors may begin to practice this covetous

pattern of ministerial behavior. The love of money can affect the man

in the pulpit just as surely as anyone in the pew. How many men have

undermined their credibility with their demanding lifestyles! Deacons

listen dismayed as such preachers speak of sacrifice. If God blesses

financially in His timing and through His abundant provision, rejoice!

But no pastor, young or old, should make extravagant demands of God's

people.

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Subj: Crosswalk Pastors Resource: Potholes And Pitfalls For Young

Preachers ‑ Dec. 19, 2005

Date: 12/19/2005 10:43:21 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Crosswalk\_Pastors\_Resources@crosswalkmail.com

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Why Do We Preach? Albert Mohler

- 12/2005.101

Preach the Word! That simple imperative frames the act of preaching as

an act of obedience. That is where any theology of preaching must

begin.

Preaching did not emerge from the church's experimentation with

communication techniques. The church does not preach because preaching

is thought to be a good idea or an effective technique. The sermon has

not earned its place in Christian worship by proving its utility in

comparison with other means of communication or aspects of worship.

Rather, we preach because we have been commanded to preach.

Preaching is a commission‑‑a charge. As Paul stated boldly, it is the

task of the minister of the gospel to "preach the Word, . . . in

season and out of season" [ - 2 Tim. 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2}]. A

theology of preaching begins with the humble acknowledgement that

preaching is not a human invention but a gracious creation of God and

a central part of His revealed will for the church.

Furthermore, preaching is distinctively Christian in its origin and

practice. Other religions may include teaching, or even public speech

and calls to prayer. However, the preaching act is sui generis, a

function of the church established by Jesus Christ.

As John A. Broadus stated: "Preaching is characteristic of

Christianity. No other religion has made the regular and frequent

assembling of groups of people, to hear religious instruction and

exhortation, and integral part of divine worship." The importance of

preaching is rooted in Scripture and revealed in the unfolding story

of the church. The church has never been faithful when it has lacked

fidelity in the pulpit. In the words of P. T. Forsyth: "With preaching

Christianity stands or falls, because it is the declaration of the

gospel."

The church cannot but preach lest it deny its own identity and

abdicate its ordained purpose. Preaching is communication, but not

mere communication. It is human speech, but much more than speech. As

Ian Pitt‑Watson noted, preaching is not even "a kind of speech

communication that happens to be about God." Its ground, its goal, and

its glory are all located in the sovereign will of God.

The act of preaching brings forth a combination of exposition,

testimony, exhortation, and teaching. Still, preaching cannot be

reduced to any of these, or even to the sum total of its individual

parts combined.

The primary Greek form of the word "preach" (kerusso) reveals its

intrinsic rootage in the kerygma‑‑the gospel itself. Preaching is an

inescapably theological act, for the preacher dares to speak of God

and, in a very real sense, for God. A theology of preaching should

take Trinitarian form, reflecting the very nature of the

self‑revealing God. In so doing, it bears witness to the God who

speaks, the Son who saves, and the Spirit who illuminates.

The God Who Speaks

True preaching begins with this confession: we preach because God has

spoken. That fundamental conviction is the fulcrum of the Christian

faith and of Christian preaching. The Creator God of the universe, the

omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord, chose of his own sovereign

will to reveal Himself to us. Supreme and complete in his holiness,

needing nothing and hidden from our view, God condescended to speak to

us‑‑even to reveal Himself to us.

As Carl F. H. Henry suggests, revelation is "a divinely initiated

activity, God's free communication by which he alone turns His

personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality." In an

act of holy graciousness, God gave up His comprehensive privacy that

we might know Him. God's revelation is the radical claim upon which we

dare to speak of God‑‑He has spoken!

Our God‑talk must therefore begin and end with what God has spoken

concerning Himself. Preaching is not the business of speculating about

God's nature, will, or ways, but is bearing witness to what God has

spoken concerning Himself. Preaching does not consist of speculation

but of exposition.

The preacher dares to speak the Word of truth to a generation which

rejects the very notion of objective, public truth. This is not rooted

in the preacher's arrogant claim to have discovered worldly wisdom or

to have penetrated the secrets of the universe. To the contrary, the

preacher dares to proclaim truth on the basis of God's sovereign

self‑disclosure. God has spoken, and He has commanded us to speak of

Him.

The Bible bears witness to itself as the written Word of God. This

springs from the fact that God has spoken. In the Old Testament alone,

the phrases "the Lord said," "the Lord spoke," and "the word of the

Lord came" appear at least 3,808 times. This confession brings the

preacher face to face with Scripture as divine revelation. The

authority of Scripture is none other than the authority of God

Himself.

As the Reformation formula testifies, "where Scripture speaks, God

speaks." The authority of the preacher is intrinsically rooted in the

authority of the Bible as the church's Book and the unblemished Word

of God. Its total truthfulness is a witness to God's own holiness. We

speak because God has spoken, and because he has given us His Word.

As Scripture itself records, God has called the church to speak of Him

on the basis of his Word and deeds. All Christian preaching is

biblical preaching. That formula is axiomatic. Those who preach from

some other authority or text may speak with great effect and

attractiveness, but they are preaching "another gospel," and their

words will betray them. Christian preaching is not an easy task. Those

who are called to preach bear a heavy duty.

As Martin Luther confessed "If I could come down with a good

conscience, I would rather be stretched out on a wheel and carry

stones than preach one sermon." Speaking on the basis of what God has

spoken is both arduous and glorious.

A theology of preaching begins with the confession that the God who

speaks has ultimate claim upon us. He who spoke a word and brought a

world into being created us from the dust. God has chosen enlivened

dust‑‑and all creation‑‑to bear testimony to his glory.

In preaching, finite, frail, and fault‑ridden human beings bear bold

witness to the infinite, all‑powerful, and perfect Lord. Such an

endeavor would smack of unmitigated arrogance and over‑reaching were

it not for the fact that God Himself has set us to the task. In this

light, preaching is not an act of arrogance, but of humility. True

preaching is not an exhibition of the brilliance or intellect of the

preacher, but an exposition of the wisdom and power of God.

This is possible only when the preacher stands in submission to the

text of Scripture. The issue of authority is inescapable. Either the

preacher or the text will be the operant authority. A theology of

preaching serves to remind those who preach of the danger of confusing

our own authority with that of the biblical text. We are called, not

only to preach, but to preach the Word.

Acknowledging the God who speaks as Lord is to surrender the preaching

event in an act of glad submission. Preaching thus becomes the

occasion for the Word of the Lord to break forth anew. This occasion

itself represents the divine initiative, for it is God Himself, and

not the preacher, who controls His Word. John Calvin understood this

truth when he affirmed that "The Word goeth out of the mouth of God in

such a manner that it likewise goeth out of the mouth of men; for God

does not speak openly from heaven but employs men as His instruments."

Calvin understood preaching to be the process by which God uses human

instruments to speak what He Himself has spoken. This He accomplishes

through the preaching of Scripture under the illumination and

testimonium of the Holy Spirit. God uses preachers, Calvin offered,

"rather than to thunder at us and drive us away." Further, "it is

singular privilege that he deigns to consecrate to Himself the mouths

and toungues (sic) of men in order that His voice may resound in

them."

Thus, preaching springs from the truth that God has spoken in word and

deed and that He has chosen human vessels to bear witness to Himself

and his gospel. We speak because we cannot be silent. We speak because

God has spoken.

Subj: Crosswalk Pastors Resource: Why Do We Preach? ‑ Dec. 26, 2005

Date: 12/26/2005 6:56:12 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Crosswalk\_Pastors\_Resources@crosswalkmail.com

Reply‑to: hjewjpwteeyaa@crosswalkmail.com

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Humor - You Might be a Preacher if...

- 2/2006.101

You Might be a Preacher if...."

1. You've been asked, "What's so hard about preaching?"

2. Others wished they only worked one day a week for a weeks pay!

3. ...if you have ever said "I'm NEVER going to be a preacher!"

4. You wear your new shoes to church and someone comments "We are

paying you too much money!"

5. Women call up and say they want you to marry them.

6. You keep relating movies you've seen to sermon topics.

7. Your children are the worst kids in the church!

8. You name your bed "The Word." ‑ ( You tell everyone that you "Stay

in the Word")

9. You jiggle all the commode handles at the church before you leave.

10.Instead of being "ticked off," you get "grieved in your spirit."

11.You've ever dreamed you were preaching only to awaken and discover

you were.

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You Might be a Preacher if......

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To get us started....

1. You hesitate to tell people what you do for a living.

2. You've ever dreamed you were preaching only to awaken and discover

you were.

3. You've wondered why people couldn't die at more appropriate times.

4. You find yourself counting people at a sporting event.

5. You're leading the church into the 21st century, but you don't know

what you are preaching on Sunday.

6. A church picnic is no picnic.

7. You've ever spoken for free and were worth every penny of it.

8. You drive a Buick with more than 100,000 miles on it.

9. People sleep while you're talking.

10. It's Sunday, but Monday's coming.

11. You feel guilty when you go fishing.

12. Instead of being "ticked off," you get "grieved in your spirit."

13. You've been tempted to take an offering at a family reunion.

14. You jiggle all the commode handles at the church before you leave.

15. You'd rather talk to people with their heads bowed and every eye

closed.

16. You've ever wanted to 'lay hands' on a deacon's neck.

...by Stan Toler and Mark Hollingsworth from the book "You Might be a

Preacher if..."

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Why is Preaching So Important?

Why is Preaching So Important

- 2/2006.101

Why is Preaching So Important?

- 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV - 2 Timothy 4:2 NIV}, NIRV, TNIV, KJV)

PREACHINGS IMPORTANCE

WHY IS PREACHING SO IMPORTANT?

A. God commands us to preach when its convenient and when its not,

to reprove, rebuke, encourage with great patience and instruction.

( - 2 Tim. 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2})

B. Preaching follows the models of Christ, Paul, and the Prophets. We

are told to imitate the faith of those who have gone before.

( - Heb. 13:7 - Hebrews 13:7})

C. Preaching has great power, potential, and capacity to bring about

change in individuals, institutions, and societies. ( - Mt.

28:19 - Matthew 28:19}, - 20 - Matthew 28:20})

D. Preaching is one of the most effective ways of winning people to

faith in Jesus Christ. ( - Mk. 16:15 - Mark 16:15})

E. Historically, preaching has become the principle means of leading,

teaching, and feeding the flock of God. ( - Jn. 21:15‑17 - John

21:15‑17})

F. Despite all the competition, preaching continues to remain the most

popular form of expositing the word of God throughout the world.

( - Rom. 1:16 - Romans 1:16})

G. Preaching offers tremendous variety in presenting the truth of God

from the scriptures (Expository, topical, biographical, thematic,

textual, devotional, evangelistic, childrens sermons, weddings, etc)

H. Preaching is fit for all types of occasions; funerals, baptism,

weddings, launchings, graduations, tithing conferences, revivals,

church planting conferences, Sunday morning services, prayer meetings,

naming ceremonies, child dedications, film shows, conventions, board

meetings, building dedications.

I. Preaching offers great authority which people recognize through the

credibility of the word of God.

J. Some preaching can also be used to forward personal interests over

the interest of the scriptures. It is for this reason that we must be

careful how we use the pulpit lest God be displeased.

K. Poor preaching has a way of detracting from the essential messages

of scripture.

L. Incomplete preaching has a way of communicating only partial truths

that are out of balance with the full counsel of God.

M. False preaching can dangerously lead people into heretical

doctrines.

N. Counterfeit preachers can lead people down paths of destruction.

O. Social preachers can inadvertently fool people into thinking that

they are doing the full will of God.

P. Poorly prepared preachers will be accountable to God for their

failure to feed, teach, and mature their flock.

R. Incompetent preachers will come under stricter judgment from God

for their distorted teaching. (Jm. 3:1)

S. Preaching has universal appeal in its ability to communicate truth

simply, clearly, and convincingly.

T. Preaching can reach the highly educated as well as the uneducated.

U. Preaching can cut across all tribal, social, political, age, sexual

(Male‑Female), cultural, physical, and language lines if done

properly, contextually, and effectively.

V. God continues to speak through preachers today in powerful, timely,

and relevant ways. Who are we to refuse to listen to Gods message?

W. Preaching can touch many different people in many different ways.

The Holy Spirit can take the message of scriptures and use it to

convict individuals in personal ways.

X. Biblical preaching can never grow old since the scriptures are

living and active with the ability to discern the thoughts of each

persons heart.

Y. Preaching may not appear to be the most rational way to effect

change, but the scriptures teach that Gods ways are higher than mans

way. ( - Isa. 55:8 - Isaiah 55:8}, - 9 - Isaiah 55:9})

Z. The Lord promises us that His word will not return to Him without

accomplishing His purposes. ( - Isa. 55:10 - Isaiah

55:10}, - 11 - Isaiah 55:11})

AA. - Isa. 40:8 - Isaiah 40:8} promises preachers that their

labor is not in vain in the Lord. ``The grass withers and the flowers

fall but the word of our God stands forever!

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A PREACHER

A. He must be a born‑again Christian who is in intimate fellowship

with Christ.

B. He must know the scriptures and the power of God. ( - Mk.

12:24 - Mark 12:24})

C. He must know his audience; their needs, wants, and problems.

D. He must be a man above reproach, a one woman man, not quarrelsome,

temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not

addicted to wine, or possessing a hot temper, kind, gentle, humble,

loving, patient, rejecting those who are in opposition so that God

could grant them knowledge of the truth.

E. Commitment to Christ, the church, and to the great commission

( - Mt. 28:19 - Matthew 28:19}, - 20 - Matthew 28:20}).

F. Leadership qualities that express themselves in service.

G. A call of God to preach the word with confidence, boldness,

accuracy, empowerment from the Holy Spirit, uncompromising spirit,

truth, forcefulness, and courage!

H. Gifts from the Holy Spirit in the areas of preaching, teaching, or

exhortation.

I. Training in hermeneutics (Interpreting the Bible) and homiletics

(Preaching the Bible).

J. Knowledge of the science and art of human relations,

communications, and the scriptures.

K. A moral, ethical, and upright life that does not distract from one

s preaching.

L. Evangelistic fervor to see many people saved from hell.

M. A desire to continually grow in grace and knowledge of Christ.

N. A love for Jesus Christ and people.

O. A deep trust, evidenced through a strong prayer life.

P. Discipline to continually be a student of the Bible.

Q. Physically, socially, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually fit.

R. Ability to manage his own house.

S. A solid theological foundation.

T. Access to good Biblical tools for sermon preparation. (Bible

dictionary, commentaries, concordance, and Preachers Manuals).

U. Educationally capable of learning means of improving his preaching.

V. Ability to infuse variety in his preaching through expositional,

biographical, topical, thematic, historical, devotional sermons etc.

W. Ability to plan his sermons with prayer and illustration materials.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=38378&Contrib

utorID=6170

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Humor - Reading - Sam Clements, age 6

- 3/2006.101

Sam Clements, age 6, the grand son of North American Presbyter Sam

Clements said with tears, "I'm called to preach."

The response was given, "That's great ‑ what's wrong?"

"Crying, But I can't read, "he quickly responds. (Bringing a smile to our face.)

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Preaching to the Secular Mind

- 7/2006.101

Preaching to the Secular Mind

Speaking to the Secular Mind

We can't win non‑Christians if we don't know how they think, and we

can't know how they think if we never enter their world.

By Bill Hybels

Driving home from church one day, I pulled behind a guy on his

Harley‑Davidson. I noticed a bumper sticker on the rear fender of his

motorcycle, so I pulled closer. It read: [EXPLETIVE] GUILT.

After the shock wore off, I was struck by how different his world was

from the one I'd just left, and even from the world a generation ago.

In my day, we felt guilty, I thought. Now, it's not only "I don't feel

guilty," but "[Expletive] guilt."

There was a time when your word was a guarantee, when marriage was

permanent, when ethics were assumed. Not so very long ago, heaven and

hell were unquestioned, and caring for the poor was an obvious part of

what it meant to be a decent person. Conspicuous consumption was

frowned upon because it was conspicuous. The label self‑centered was

to be avoided at all costs, because it said something horrendous about

your character.

Today, all of that has changed. Not only is it different, but people

can hardly remember what the former days were like.

Why We Need a New Approach

Many churches, however, still operate with the understanding that

non‑Christians are going to come through the doors, feel pretty much

at home, understand the sovereignty of God and the redemptive work of

Jesus Christ, and in one morning make a complete transition from a

secular worldview.

Even 20 years ago that may have been a reasonable hope. The secular

worldview wasn't that disconnected from God's agenda. A guy would hear

the claims of Christ and say, "Well, that makes sense. I know I'm a

sinner" or "I know I shouldn't drink so much" or "I really should be

faithful to my wife."

Today, even though we're asking for the same thinga commitment to

Christin the perception of the secular person, we're asking for far

more. The implications of becoming a Christian today are not just

sobering; they're staggering.

Recently I preached on telling the truth, and afterward a man came up

and said, "You don't understand what you're saying."

"What don't I understand?" I asked him.

"You're just up there doing what pastors are supposed to dotalk about

truth. But my job requires my violating about five of the things you

just talked about. It's part of the job description; I can't be 'on

the level' and keep the position. You're not asking me to adopt some

value system; you're asking me to give up my salary and abandon my

career."

We preachers, I was reminded that day, have our work cut out for us.

The topics we choose, the way we present Scripture, the illustrations

we use, the responses we ask for, all need to contribute to our goal

of effectively presenting Christ to non‑Christians. Here is what I've

learned, sometimes the hard way, about what kind of preaching attracts

them, keeps them coming back, and most important, leads them to take

the momentous step of following Jesus Christ.

Sensitive Training

If we're going to speak with integrity to secular men and women, we

need to work through two critical areas before we step into the

pulpit.

The first is to understand the way they think. For most of us pastors,

though, that's a challenge. The majority of my colleagues went to a

Bible school or Christian college and on to seminary, and have worked

in the church ever since. As a result, most have never been close

friends with a non‑Christian. They want to make their preaching

connect with unchurched people, but they've never been close enough to

them to gain an intimate understanding of how their minds work.

If we're serious about reaching the non‑Christian, most of us are

going to have to take some giant steps. I have suggested for many

years that our pastors at Willow Creek find authentic interest areas

in their livestennis, golf, jogging, sailing, mechanical work,

whateverand pursue these in a totally secular realm. Instead of

joining a church league softball team, why not join a park district

team? Instead of working out in the church gym, shoot baskets at the

YMCA. On vacation, don't go to a Bible conference but to some state

park where the guy in the next campsite is going to bring over his

six‑pack and sit at your picnic table.

The second prerequisite to effective preaching to non‑Christians is

that we like them. If we don't, it's going to bleed through our

preaching. Listen closely to sermons on the radio or television, and

often you'll hear remarks about "those worldly secular people."

Unintentionally, these speakers distance themselves from the

non‑Christian listener; it's us against them. I find myself wondering

whether these preachers are convinced that lost people matter to God.

It's not a merciful, "Let's tell them we love them," but a ticked off

"They're going to get what's coming to them." These preachers forfeit

their opportunity to speak to non‑Christians because the unchurched

person immediately senses, They don't like me.

Creative Topics and Titles

Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like

it, but for every sermon we preach, they're asking, Am I interested in

that subject? If they aren't, it doesn't matter how effective our

delivery is; their minds will check out.

When the book Real Men Don't Eat Quiche came out, sales immediately

took off. Everyone was talking about it. As I was thinking about the

amazing success of that book, I decided to preach a series, "What

Makes a Man a Man? What Makes a Woman a Woman?" Unchurched people

heard the titles, and they came; attendance climbed 20 percent in just

four weeks.

"Why" Explanations

Unchurched people don't give the Bible a fraction of the weight we

believers do. They look at it as an occasionally useful collection of

helpful suggestions, something like the Farmer's Almanac. They tend to

think, The Bible has some neat things to say once in awhile, but it's

not the kind of thing I'm going to change my life radically to obey.

If we simply quote the Bible and say, "That settles it. Now obey

that," they're going to say, "What? I'm supposed to rebuild my life on

some book that's thousands of years old? I don't do that for any other

respected literary work of antiquity." It just doesn't make sense to

them.

So almost every time I preach, I'm trying to build up the reliability

of Scripture and increase their respect for it. I do that by

explaining the wisdom of God behind it. When you show them how

reasonable God is, that captivates the secular mind.

Most secular folks have written off Christians as people who believe

in floods and angels and strange miracles. My goal is to explain, in a

reasonably intelligent fashion, some matters that touch their lives. I

hope when they leave they'll say, "Maybe there is something to the

Bible and to the Christian life."

Consider, the verse that instructs us, "Don't be unequally yoked."

Some teachers speaking on that passage will say, "The implications are

obvious: Don't marry a nonbeliever. The Bible says it, and we need to

obey it." For the already convinced person, who puts great value on

the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, that might be enough.

I don't think most church people buy it as much as we hope they will,

but let's say they give us the indication that they do.

The secular guy, on the other hand, sits there and thinks, That is

about the most stupid and discriminatory thing I have ever heard. Why

should I refuse to marry someone I love simply because her religion is

a little different? So one Sunday morning, I started by saying, "I'm

going to read to you the most disliked sentence in all of Scripture

for single people who are anxious to get married." Then I read.

"This is that awful verse," I said, "in which, under the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit, Paul cuts down the field from hundreds of

thousands of marriageable candidates to only a handful. And almost

every single person I know, upon first hearing it, hates that verse.

What I want to do is spend the next thirty minutes telling you why I

think God would write such an outrageous prescription."

During the rest of that message, I tried to show, using logic and

their experience, that this command makes terrific sense. We were in a

construction program at the time, so I used this illustration: "What

if I went out to the construction site, and I found one contractor,

with his fifteen workers, busily constructing our building from one

set of plans, and then I went to the other side of the building, and

here's another contractor building his part of the building from a

totally different set of blueprints? There'd be total chaos.

"Friends," I continued, "what happens in a marriage when you've got a

husband who says, 'I'm going to build this marriage on this

blueprint,' and a wife who says, 'I'm going to build it on this

blueprint'? They collide, and usually the strongest person winsfor a

time. But then there's destruction.

"God wants his children to build solid, permanent relationships, and

he knows it's going to take a single set of plans. In order to build a

solid building or a sound marriage, you need one set of blueprints."

Over time, I try to increase gradually their respect for Scripture, so

that someday they won't have to ask all the why questions but will be

able to say to themselves, Because it's in the Book, that's why.

Freeing Responses

When people walk into church, often they're thinking they'll get the

party line again: Pray more, love more, serve more, give more. They

just want something more out of me, they think. I wonder what it'll be

today that I'm not doing enough of.

It's easy for us pastors to unintentionally foster that understanding.

One pastor asked me for help with his preaching, and we talked about

what responses he wanted. I suggested, "List the messages you've

preached in the last year, and write either pray more, love more,

serve more or give more next to any message where that was the main

thrust of the sermon."

He came back and said, "Bill, one of those was the thrust of every

single sermon last year." He recognized the implications. If every

time my son comes into the living room, I say, "Do this more; do that

more," pretty soon he won't want to come in the living room. But if he

comes in knowing there is going to be some warmth, acceptance, a

little humor, and encouragement, then on the occasions I need to say,

"We've got to straighten out something here," he can receive that.

Trying to reach non‑Christians isn't easy, and it's not getting

easier. But what keeps me preaching are the times when after many

months, I do get through.

Once a man said to me, "I came to your church, and nobody knew what

really was going on in my life because I had 'em all fooled. But I

knew, and when you started saying that in spite of all my sin I still

mattered to God, something clicked in me. I committed myself to

Christ, and I tell you, I'm different. My son and I haven't been

getting along at all, but I decided to take two weeks off and take him

to a baseball camp out west. He started opening up to me while we were

out there. Thanks, Bill, for telling me about Jesus."

For a preacher, such a joy far surpasses the ongoing challenge.

From the book Growing Your Church Through Evangelism and Outreach.

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\webpage{http://www.christianitytoday.com/bcl/areas/missions/articles/0

71206.html

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Preaching - Spiritual Blindness

John Knox never entered a pulpit until he was 40 years old and

biographers conclude that much of the fire and energy of his preaching

was due to the fact that the flame had been so long pent up within his

breast.

- - - 1 Pet 1:2 - 1 Peter 1:2

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Evangelists - Dwight L. Moody

- 6/1989.19

Dwight L. Moody, by his own admission, made a mistake on the eighth

of October 1871 ‑‑ a mistake he determined never to repeat.

He had been preaching in the city of Chicago. That particular

night drew his largest audience yet. His message was "What will you

do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

By the end of the service, he was tired. He concluded his message

with a presentation of the gospel and a concluding statement: "Now I

give you a week to think that over. And when we come together again,

you will have opportunity to respond."

A soloist began to sing. But before the final note, the music was

drowned out by clanging bells and wailing sirens screaming through the

streets. The great Chicago Fire was blazing. In the ashen aftermath,

hundreds were dead and over a hundred thousand were homeless.

Without a doubt, some who heard Moody's message had died in the

fire. He reflected remorsefully that he would have given his right

arm before he would ever give an audience another week to think over

the message of the gospel.

- - - Psa 32:6 - Psalms 32:6 - - 2 Cor 6:2 - 2

Corinthians 6:2 - - Heb 3:15 - Hebrews 3:15

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Preaching ‑ Get Real - 6/2007.101

Acknowledge the reality that life in a fallen world includes sin and

suffering. Don't pretend to be happy all the time or to have all the

answers. Don't give your congregation sugar‑coated pop psychology,

oversimplify complex issues, or mince words with them. Admit your

frailties. Be humble, open and honest. Let your authenticity lead you

to confess your sins and turn from them so your congregation can see a

holy God transforming a broken human being. Speak as freely about your

doubts and pain as you do about your faith and joy, because each

extreme gives context for the other to glorify God's work.

Adapted from Future Church: Ministry in a Post‑Seeker Age, by James L.

Wilson, 2004, Broadman & Holman

Subj: Church Leaders Intelligence Report Enclosed ‑ 05.30.2007

Date: 5/30/2007 8:09:52 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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If They Pay You to Speak, Is It Ministry? Or Business? Rebekah Montgomery

- 7/2007.101

If They Pay You to Speak, Is It Ministry? Or Business? Rebekah Montgomery

When it comes to ministry and money, there is not a one‑size‑fits‑all

answer. Look over these examples. Where do you fit? What fits you?

Most importantly, how is God telling you to handle this?

Ministry By Faith

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia begging him,

Come over to Macedonia and help us. ( - Acts 16:9 - Acts

16:9}‑NIV)

Like Paul, for most of us, its not about money. Perhaps you also hear

voices of women calling for help in your sleep. So when you speak, it

is about answering the vision God has given you ??? not collecting

your honorarium.

Heres something about Pauls ministry fees youll want to remember:

Pauls first contact and convert in Macedonia was Lydia, a

businesswoman to the rich and famous of Philippi. She not only made

sure Paul met her influential clientele, she provided for him

financially.

God has called some of us to ministry by faith. We receive a vision,

step out and go to Macedonia ??? or Paducah ??? and God provides a

Lydia in the person of a supportive husband, a sponsor, or maybe a

financial bequest.

Ministry By Making Tents

Paul went to Corinth. There he met Aquila with his wife Priscilla and

because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with

them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue (Excerpts from

- Acts 18:1‑4 - Acts 18:1‑4})

A few years ago, I encountered an elderly but spry widow woman

preaching the Gospel outside Jerusalems Joppa Gate. She told me that

she has preached on 7 continents and that her ministry is

self‑supported ??? by selling cosmetics!

God has called some of us to minister by making tents or working

with our talents to support our ministry. Right to the Heart of Women

eZines main sponsor, Jubilant Press , is one such tentmaker

ministry.

Ministry‑For‑Hire

...for the worker is worthy of his support. ( - Matthew

10:10 - Matthew 10:10})

Jesus said it. We believe it. But even so, this area can be awkward to

talk about.

Kathy Collard Millers book, The Complete Guide to Speaking

Professionally , addresses the subject of ministry‑for‑hire. Here is a

small excerpt:

Most people do not understand the expenses that a speaker has. There

are costs like office supplies, telephone charges, dry cleaning,

specialized clothing, automobile expenses, printing costs, and mailing

costs. Though we may speak for only one hour at an event, a lot more

time and energy is expended to do that.

The most awkward part of fees, obviously, is actually discussing them

with the meeting planner. If they do bring it up themselves and ask,

What do you charge? I respond by asking, What do you have available

in your budget for the speaker? If they respond with an amount that

is more than you usually request, you can cheerfully say, Thank you

very much. If it is less than you usually request, you can say

something like, Well, I usually request such and such an amount. Is

there any way that you can raise your budget? You must decide whether

you are willing to take the lower fee.

Although this is indeed an awkward part of our ministry, talking to

knowledgeable people and seeking the Lord's guidance will give you

greater confidence in determining your fees.

Please Click

Here to subscribe to the Right to the Heart mailing list.

Rebekah Montgomery is the editor of Right to the Heart of Women

e‑zine, a publisher at Jubilant Press, and the author of numerous

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Montgomery 2007. For reprint requests, contact Rebekah at her website,

www.RebekahMontgomery.com

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Contextual Preaching - The Key to Preaching So Your Audience Can Hear by Ed Stetzer

- 8/2007.101

Contextual Preaching:

The Key to Preaching So Your Audience Can Hear

by Ed Stetzer

At the heart of effective preaching is a solid missiological

perspective. Are you communicating in such a way that your words

actually convey biblical truth to your audience? Or does your

preaching float right past your hearers because its not delivered on

a frequency that they listen to? In this respect, we can probably

learn as much about good preaching from Hudson Taylor as we can from

Haddon Robinson.

Indigenization

Jesus left his comfortable dwelling in heaven and took on the

appearance of those he sought to reach. He wore their clothes, ate

their food, spoke their language, and understood their culture at its

deepest level. He fully identified with his hearers.

The idea behind indigenization for us today is that a church should

spring forth out of the soil in which it is planted. It is indigenous

in that its leadership, expressions, forms, and functions reflect a

biblical expression in a certain context.

What we have found is that when the pastoral leadership, core of the

church, and community all line up, the potential for the church to

take on an indigenous or contextual form is significant. This

combination seems to provide a greenhouse for explosive growth.

Preaching is a central part of that process.

Contextualization

If the church is to become an indigenous expression of its context,

then contextualization comes into play. When it comes to

contextualization, reality suggests that the eternal, universal truth

of Gods Word is understood and appropriated by people through a

cultural grid or framework. Though we understand and appropriate the

truth as conditioned by culture, biblical truth is eternal. However,

we (and the hearers) are not!

The Way the Message Is Communicated

By far, the most controversial point of this whole discussion is the

way the message is communicated. Many in the Christian church suggest

that the only way to communicate the gospel is through verse‑by‑verse

expository preaching. Others like Rick Warren have adopted what he

calls a topical exposition approach. Still others like Dan Kimball, in

The Emerging Church, talk about a theotopical approach. Ive written

more about types of preaching elsewhere. But, the issue here is not

whether you approach Scripture from an expository perspective or a

topical one; it has more to do with your starting point so you can be

understood by your hearers.

Most Christians prefer to begin at the point of biblical

revelationThus saith the Word of God! For us, a simple reference to

- John 3 - John 3} or - Psalm 32 - Psalms 32} means

that we are about to hear something important and relevant to our

lives. From biblical revelation, we move toward application or

relevance. Based on what Gods Word says, here is how we need to apply

it to our lives. For those who are disconnected from Christ and the

church or even new believers, their beginning point can be very

different. They are often ignorant regarding any expression of

Scripture and, at the very least, neutral toward it if not hostile.

As one person in our church asked: How many books do Christians use?

I hear you talking about the Old Testament and the New Testament. The

other day it was the book of John and then it was the book of Luke.

How many books do you use? This is not uncommon in our culture today.

For those with no biblical reverence point, the beginning point is

often that of relevance. They are asking, Does this have anything to

do with my life? Or Is it relevant?

Since we know it is true and we know it is relevant we have to help

them see that it is both.

After you have done the most important part of working through the

Scriptures to understand and convey them accurately, then help your

hearer understand why they should pay attention. So, we would

encourage you to start like this:

Why is this important and how does it relate to me?

What does the Bible say about it?

What am I going to do with what the Bible says about it?

Instead of:

The Bible says this.

It is important.

You should do it.

Paul demonstrated this when he was invited to speak to a completely

Jewish audience after entering a synagogue in Pisdian Antioch; he

began with the Old Testament. He did not quote directly from the Old

Testament, but began by summarizing its historical account. Men of

Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the

people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during

their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that

country, he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert,

he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people

as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years ( - Acts

13:16‑20 - Acts 13:16‑20}).

When communicating to the less educated at Lystra ( - Acts

14 - Acts 14}), he used examples of nature, sea, and crops. He spoke

to an agrarian people with agrarian metaphors.

On the other hand, when Paul was in front of a very different audience

in Athens, his starting point was different. We read in

- Acts 17 - Acts 17}, Paul then stood up in the meeting of

the Areopagus and said: Men of Athens! I see that in every way, you

are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at

your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am

going to proclaim to you ( - Acts 17:22‑23 - Acts 17:22‑23}).

The Apostle Paul began where the people he was speaking to were. For

the Jews, the starting point was their ancient history rooted in the

Old Testament Scriptures. On the other hand, Paul connected with the

Greeks at their point of relevance. Notice that he presented Christ in

both cases. For us, we may start in a different place, but the context

of the message needs to be Christ and the fullness of Scripture. The

key is where the communication begins. Scripture sets the agenda and

shape of the message, but every message must answer the question, Why

is this important to me/us? If there is no point of connection, the

message is simply meaningless facts rather than life‑changing truth.

Redemptive Analogies

When we begin at the point of relevance, it does not in any way

nullify the importance of rightly dividing the Word of God. We think

that a common mistake many seeker‑driven churches made early on was

trying to communicate relevant messages that had little or no biblical

content. It seemed that the sermons were basically explanations of

common‑sense wisdom or perhaps biblical principals, but the Bible did

not set the shape or agenda of the message.

We must always remember that consequently, faith comes from hearing

the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ

( - Rom. 10:17 - Romans 10:17}) and the word of God is living

and active. Sharper than any double‑edged sword, it penetrates even to

dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts

and attitudes of the heart ( - Heb. 4:12 - Hebrews 4:12}). The

Bible is not simply a tool for scriptural footnoting or common‑sense

wisdom.

One of the cultural shifts that we are experiencing is the shift from

the secular to the spiritual. This shift lends itself to biblical

preaching and teaching. People are looking for a higher power, a sense

of mystery, revelation, and spiritual authority for their lives.

Scripture was given to reveal Jesus; therefore, all of our preaching

should be Christ‑centered. With this in mind, we must ask, How do we

communicate the good news of the gospel in a way that the story of

redemption is heard and experienced?

In our highly spiritual world, we must look for cultural bridges that

we can cross in order to carry the good news to a spiritually hungry

people. Don Richardson gives us great insight regarding this in his

books Peace Child and Eternity in Their Hearts. Using the concept of

redemptive analogy, he describes the importance of finding a common

cultural understanding as a tool for sharing the gospel with the Sawi

or other groups. In an interview with Dick Staub, Don gives the

following account of this concept:

"When Caroline and I lived among the Sawi and learned their language,

we found that they honored treachery as a virtue. This came to light

when I told them the story of Judas betraying Jesus to death after

three years of friendship. They acclaimed Judas as the hero of the

story. It seemed as if it would not be easy for such people to

understand Gods redemption in Jesus. But lo and behold, their way of

making peace required a father in one of two warring villages to make

an incredible sacrifice. He had to be willing to give one of his

children as a peace child to his enemies. Caroline and I saw this

happen, and we saw the peace that resulted from a mans sorrowful

sacrifice of his own son. That enabled me to proclaim Jesus as the

greatest peace child given by the greatest father."

In Lords of the Earth, the Yali tribe had places of refuge. That was

their special redemptive analogy. In other words, theres something

that serves as a cultural compass to point men and women toward Jesus,

something that is in their own background, part of their own culture.

We must look for those cultural bridges to every people group,

population segment, and cultural environment. Obviously, this may look

very different from one group to another.

Redemptive analogies are 21st‑century parables. They are like the

stories Jesus told. They are examples and stories that bring truth

about the kingdom of God to life in the common language, stories, and

symbols of the day. They are like the trilogy that Jesus spoke of in

- Luke 15 - Luke 15}, where he talked about lostness by

using the example of a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a lost son. All

three of these analogies related to the culture of his day, and the

common person could place himself into the reality of any of these

stories. The stories illustrate the demonstrable love the Father has

for us.

Summary

In our current environment, contextualized preaching has its origin in

Gods heart, but it is first expressed when we connect with hearers.

He already had given us the message and the Scripture. It is relevant

in this and every culture.

Too often we say, I want to make the Bible relevant. No need. It

already is. Our job is to present it in ways that help the hearer see

that it is relevantin this and in every culture. We do so by

starting at their understanding and taking them to Scripture for the

whole answer.

Simply put:

It is easy to preach in culturally relevant ways.

It is easy to preach solid biblical texts.

It is hard to do both in the same message.

But, if we are to preach like Jesus and Paul, we must learn to do so.

Just as Jesus did, we must preach in a way so that people can best

understand and respond to the gospel message.

Ed Stetzer is discussing this article at www.edstetzer.com.

Ed Stetzer (Ph.D.) is author of Breaking the Missional Code, Comeback

Churches and Planting Missional Churches. He currently serves as the

Director of LifeWay Research. This article is adapted from the book,

Breaking the Missional Code by Ed Stetzer and David Putnam. You can

interact concerning this article at www.edstetzer.com.

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Bible Studies ‑ Hermeneutics - Pastor John Paul Miller

- 9/2007.101

HERMENEUTICS

Pastor John Paul Miller

Taught by Pastor John Paul Miller

INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS II Tim 2:15

I. WHY IS BIBLE INTERPRETATION IMPORTANT?

1. It is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly.

2. Bible interpretation is essential as a step beyond observation.

3. Bible interpretation is essential for applying the Bible properly.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION

III. PROBLEMS IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION

1. A time gap (chronological)

2. A space gap (geographical)

3. A customs gap (cultural)

4. A language gap (linguistic)

5. A writing gap (literary)

6. A spiritual gap (supernatural)

IV. DEFINITIONS IN HERMENEUTICS

Quote by Bernard Ramm: The word hermeneutics is ultimately derived

from Hermes the Greek god who brought the messages of the gods to the

mortals, and the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech,

writing, and art.

Hermeneutics is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. It is

a science because it is guided by rules within a system; and it is an

art because the application of the rules is by skill. And not by

mechanical imitation.

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpreting the Bible. Another

way to define hermeneutics is this: It is the science (principles) and

art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.

DEFINITIONS OF HERMENEUTICS AND RELATED TERMS

HERMENEUTICS: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the

meaning of the biblical text is determined.

EXEGESIS: The determination of the meaning of the biblical Text in its

historical and literary contexts

EXPOSITION: The communication of the meaning of the text along with

its relevance to present‑day hearers.

HOMILETICS: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the

meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a

preaching situation.

V. DIVISIONS OF HERMENEUTICS

The rules of interpretation are divided into four categories: General,

Grammatical, Historical, and Theological.

1. General Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal with

the overall subject of interpretation. They are universal in nature

rather than being limited to special considerations, which are listed

in the other three sections.

2. Grammatical Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal

with the text itself. They lay down the ground rules for understanding

the words and sentences in the passage under study.

3. Historical Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal

with the background or context in which the books of the Bible were

written. Political, economic, and cultural situations are important in

considering the historical aspect of your study of the Word of God.

4. Theological Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal

with the formation of Christian doctrine. They are, of necessity,

broad rules, for doctrine must take into consideration all that the

Bible says about a given subject.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS FOR INTERPRETATING THE BIBLE

1. No one can fully comprehend the meaning of the Bible unless he/she

is regenerated (Born Again). The unsaved person is spiritually blind

( - 2 Cor. 4:4 - 2 Corinthians 4:4}) and dead ( - Eph

2:2 - Ephesians 2:2}). ( - 1 Cor 2:14 - 1 Corinthians 2:14})

2. More than regeneration is necessary. Also reverence for and

interest in God and His Word are essential to interpreting the Bible

properly.

3. Other spiritual qualifications are a prayerful attitude and

humility.

4. The Scriptures should also be approached with a willingness to obey

them, a willingness to put into practice what has been learned in the

Word.

5. The interpreter must also depend upon the Holy Spirit.

a. His role does not mean that ones interpretations are infallible.

Inerrancy and infallibility are characteristics of the Bibles

original manuscripts, but not of the Bibles interpreters.

b. The work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation does not mean that He

gives some interpreters a hidden meaning divergent from the norm,

literal meaning of the passage.

c. As already suggested, a Christian who is living in sin is

susceptible to making inaccurate Bible interpretations because his

heart and mind are not in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

d. The Holy Spirit guides into all truth ( - John 16:13 - John

16:13}). The word guide means to lead the way or guide along the

way or road.

e. The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible means that

He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the

meaning of scripture. Many passages are readily understood, but the

meaning of others may come to light only gradually as the result of

careful study.

f. The Spirits role in interpretation means that the Bible was given

to be understood by all believers. Its interpretation is not in the

hands of an elite few scholars.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

RULE ONE: Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.

Attitudes Towards the Bible

1. Rationalism: (a) Extreme form denies the possibility of any

supernatural revelation. (b) Moderate form admit possibility of divine

revelation, but human mind is final judge of revelation.

2. Romanism: The Bible is the product of the church, therefore the

Bible is not the sole or final authority.

3. Mysticism: Experience is authoritative along with the Bible.

4. Neo‑orthodoxy: The Bible is a fallible witness to the revelation of

God.

5. Cults: The Bible and the writings of the particular cult leaders

are equally authoritative.

6. Orthodoxy: The Bible alone is the ground of authority.

Different views of inspiration.

1. Natural; no supernatural element, the bible was written by men of

great genius. 2. Mechanical.

3. Fallible Inspiration; the bible is inspired but not without error.

4. Conceptual; the concepts but not the words are inspired. 5.

Inerrant, verbal, plenary inspiration.

RULE TWO: The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains

Scripture.

1. Let the Bible be its own commentary.

2. The Bibles obscure passages are to be interpreted in light of

clear passages.

RULE THREE: Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to

understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.

RULE FOUR: Interpret personal experience in light of Scripture and not

Scripture in light of personal experience.

RULE FIVE: Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by

a command.

RULE SIX: The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not

increase our knowledge.

RULE SEVEN: Each Christian has the right and responsibility to

investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.

RULE EIGHT: Church history is important but not decisive in the

interpretation of Scripture.

GRAMMATICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

RULE ONE: Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken

literally.

RULE TWO: Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times

of the author.

RULE THREE: Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context.

RULE FOUR: Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.

RULE FIVE: When an inanimate object is used to describe a living

being, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SIX: When an expression is out of character with the thing

described, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SEVEN: The principle parts and figures of a parable represent

certain realities.

Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing

conclusions. I. - Mark 4:1‑2 - Mark 4:1‑2

Dodd's definition is that a parable "at its simplest. . . is a

metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the

hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in

sufficient doubt about its precise application to rouse it into active

thought.

II. Rules for Interpretation of Parables

1. Determine the purpose of the parable.

2. Make sure you explain the different parts of the parable in

accordance with the main design.

3. Don't try to make the parable 'walk on all fours'.

4. The parables were given to illustrate doctrine not to declare it.

5. Validate the main truth of the parable with direct teaching of

Scripture.

RULE EIGHT: Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual,

literal and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which

they are fulfilled clearly indicates they have a symbolic meaning.

Their fulfillment may be in installments, each fulfillment being a

pledge of that which is to follow.

HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

The historical principles deal with the historical setting of the

text. To whom and by whom was the book written? Why was it written and

what role did the historical setting play in shaping the message of

the book? What are the customs and surroundings of the people? These

are the kinds of questions you try to answer when considering the

historical aspect of your study.

As you begin your study of a passage, imagine yourself to be a

reporter searching for all the facts. Bombard the text with questions

such as:

\* To whom was the letter (book) written?

\* What was the background of the writer?

\* What was the experience or occasion that gave rise to the message?

\* Who are the main characters in the book?

RULE ONE: Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can

be understood only in the light of biblical history.

RULE TWO: Though Gods revelation in the Scriptures is progressive,

both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and

form a unit.

RULE THREE: Historical facts or events become types of spiritual

truths only if the Scriptures so designate them.

I. Is Typology Justified? Yes, Why?

1. The strong prophetic element in the Old Testament in its

relationship with the New Testament.

2. Jesus' use of the Old Testament.

3. The New Testament references.

II. Must Types Be Designated As Such In The New Testament?

III. What Steps Should Be Followed in Interpreting Types?

1. Determine the literal sense of the type.

2. Note the specific point or points of correspondence or resemblance

between the type and its antitype.

3. Note the specific areas of contrast or dissimilarity in order to

avoid making those elements aspects of the type.

4. Note the direct assertions in the New Testament that verify the

typological correspondence.

5. Do not prove doctrine from types unless there is clear New

Testament authority.

IV. Which Types Are Valid?

To determine which types are valid in Scripture, we must ask the

following questions:

1. Is there a definite correspondence or resemblance between the type

and the antitype? Does the type exhibit the same truths, principles,

and relationships as the corresponding New Testament reality?

2. Is the antitype in harmony with the historical setting of the type?

3. Is the type a prefiguring or foreshadowing of the antitype, or is

it merely an example or illustration? Is there a forward focus in the

type which looks ahead to something in the future?

4. Does the antitype heighten or "fulfill" the type, with the antitype

being superior to the type?

5. Can divine design be observed in the relationship of the type and

the antitype?

6. Does the New Testament in some way designate the type and the

antitype?

Given these six criteria, which Old Testament persons, events, or

things are types? I would suggest the following

17: TYPE SCRIPTURE ANTITYPE

Persons

1. Melchizedek - Heb 7:3 - Hebrews 7:3},

- 15‑17 - Hebrews 7:15‑17} Christ's perpetual priesthood

2. Aaron - Heb. 5:4‑5 - Hebrews 5:4‑5} Christ's priestly

ministry

Events

3. Passover feast - 1 Cor. 5:7 - 1 Corinthians 5:7} Christ our

sacrifice

4. Feast of Un‑ leavened Bread - 1 Cor. 5:7‑8 - 1 Corinthians

5:7‑8} Believer's holy walk

5. Feast of First fruits - 1 Cor. 15:20‑23 - 1 Corinthians

15:20‑23} Christ's resurrection a pledge of the believers resurrection

6. Feast of Pentecost - Joel 2:28 - Joel 2:28 - The coming of

the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:1‑47 - Acts 2

7. Feast of Trumpets - Matt. 24:21‑23 - Matthew 24:21‑23

Israel's re‑gathering

8. Day of Atonement - Zech 12:10 - Zechariah 12:10 - Israel's

national - Rom. 11:2‑27 - Romans 11:2‑27 - conversion by the

blood of - Heb. 9:19‑28 - Hebrews 9:19‑28} Christ

9. Feast of Tabernacles - John 7:2 - John 7:2},

- 37‑39 - John 7:37‑39} God's provision for

man's need (with Israel in the kingdom)

10. Sabbath Things - Col. 2:17 - Colossians 2:17 - The

Christian's spiritual - Heb 4:3 - Hebrews 4:3},

- 9 - Hebrews 4:9}, - 11 - Hebrews 4:11} rest

Things

11. Tabernacle - Heb 8:5 - Hebrews 8:5},

- 9:23‑24 - Hebrews 9:23‑24} Christ, the believer's

access to God and basis of fellowship with God

12. Tabernacle curtain - Heb 10:20 - Hebrews 10:20} Christ,

the believer's access to God

13. Burnt offering - Lev. 1 - Leviticus 1 - - Heb

10:5‑7 - Hebrews 10:5‑7} Christ's offering - Eph

5:2 - Ephesians 5:2} of Himself as the

perfect sacrifice

14. Grain offering - Lev 2 - Leviticus 2 - - Heb

10:8 - Hebrews 10:8} Christ's offering of Himself as the perfect

sacrifice of the highest quality

15. Fellowship offering - Lev 3 - Leviticus 3 - - Eph

2:14 - Ephesians 2:14} Christ's offering of - Col

1:20 - Colossians 1:20} Himself as the basis for fellowship with God

16. Sin offering - Lev. 4:1‑5:13 - Leviticus 4:1‑5:13 -

Christ's death for the - Heb. 13:11‑12 - Hebrews 13:11‑12

sinner in relation to the guilt of sin

17. Guilt offering - Lev. 5:14‑6:7 - Leviticus 5:14‑6:7 -

- Heb. 10:12 - Hebrews 10:12} Christ's death as an atonement

for the injury of sin

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION INTRODUCTION:

Theology is the study of God and His relation to the world. The source

book for this study is the Bible. Theology seeks to draw conclusions

on various broad and important topics in the Bible. What is God like?

What is the nature of man? What is a proper doctrine of salvation?

These are the kinds of subjects with which theology deals. Theological

principles are those broad rules that deal with the formation of

doctrine. For example, how can we tell if a doctrine is truly

biblical?

RULE ONE: You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can

understand it theologically.

RULE TWO: A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up

and includes all that the Scriptures say about it.

RULE THREE: When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be

contradictory, accept both as scriptural in the confident belief that

they resolve themselves into a higher unity.

A number of seeming contradictions or paradoxes exist in the

Scriptures. "Seeming" because they really are not. They appear

contradictory because the finite mind of man cannot comprehend the

infinite mind of God.

Some familiar paradoxes to the human mind are:

1. The Trinity.

2. The dual nature of Christ.

3. The origin and existence of evil.

4. The sovereign election of God and responsibility of man.

5. The main burden of doctrinal teaching must rest on the literal

interpretation of the Bible.

6. The main burden of our theology should rest on the teaching of the

New Testament.

7. Exegesis is prior to any system of theology.

8. Don't extend our doctrines beyond the Scriptural evidence.

9. No doctrine should be constructed from an uncertain textual

reading.

RULE FOUR: A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered

biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it.

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Preaching and Yelling ‑ The Difference - Steven Smith

The Difference Between Preaching and Yelling

Steven Smith

- 9/2007.101

Preaching and Yelling ‑ The Difference

The Difference Between Preaching and Yelling

Steven Smith

The Difference Between Preaching and Yelling

By Steven Smith

Oh, everyone preaches at our house sir.

From SilasPartners.com ‑

The year was 1935. On a large farm in Oklahoma, a young boy named

Dalton Jennings felt the responsibility and freedom that came from

farming life. He was up early, tended to all his chores, and enjoyed

a somewhat quiet early childhood. Yet, it was at the age of nine when

things began to change.

A farming accident left his father with a head injury causing severe

hearing loss and occasional headaches. Like all in the farming

community, he simply got by in life and did the best he could with the

limited help of rural medicine. He got along, that is, with one

hitch. In order to communicate with his father, Dalton and the entire

family had to yell. And yell they did. In the morning and evening

the pleasant home was filled with continual yelling. No emotions

involved just loud voices bellowing in natural compensation for Dad

s hearing loss.

When Dalton was fourteen, the local preacher was making conversation

with his family after church and kindly said, Son, maybe you will

make a preacher one day.

Oh, everyone preaches at our house sir. Dalton quipped. It seems

that preaching and yelling were the same for this quiet, precocious

child. The pastor was so amused at this young man, he asked him to

return that evening and read Scripture and have prayer before

Christian Training Union time.

Young Dalton unpretentiously approached the front of the church that

afternoon, arousing only mild expectation from his listeners. He

turned to - Matthew 5 - Matthew 5} to read the beatitudes and,

knowing his dad was in the audience, proceeded to belt the words of

Christ in a thunderous voice. Neither the congregation, nor Dalton,

realized the gift he had honed for years in the daily conversation of

his home. The stunned crowd sat in silence at the quiet boy with the

massive voice. When the pastor affirmed him after the service, Dalton

simply replied, I told you, everyone preaches at our house.

Dalton would soon win the hearts of his surprised family and friends

in the small farming community. They loved him for his passion and

his quiet demeanor that morphed into a thunderous voice when before a

crowd.

Inevitably, Dalton would leave the farm to pursue training for

Christian ministry. He returned a year later to preach both Sunday

services at his home church. Dalton did not let on that he was

disappointed with only little success in his training, and preaching

abroad.

However. that afternoon he shared his frustration with his uneducated

father who had sensed something was wrong with the morning sermon.

His father had always been silent on such matters, but a flood of

bottled up wisdom poured out when he gave Dalton the secret that would

change his life forever.

Son you cant preach because you have not listened. Its not that

people dont listen to you, its that you dont listen to God.

But, Dad, I have the best voice of anyone my age!

Dalton, preaching is not people hearing you, it's you hearing from

God. Dalton was bewildered at his fathers presumption that he could

tell him about ministry, and he turned to walk away.

Countering his sons frustration, he said in his loud voice, Son, don

t you know how hard it is for me to hear? His father continued to

yell. Every day that I wake up I strain to hear the smallest sound!

But I dont care, because you learned your voice through my pain. I

think Im deaf so others wont have to be."

He continued, Now you have to go before God everyday and strain to

hear the voice of God. Listen hard to hear every little sound. And

if you dont plan on hearing from God, my pain and your preaching will

both be lost; so do us both a favor and farm. Or, you to go in the

house and dont come out till youve heard from God."

After a short pause, the father added, "My deafness gave you a voice,

your deafness will take it away. The stinging reality of those

words compelled Dalton to go the house and bury himself in a backroom.

When he entered the pulpit that night he preached with the passion of

a man who had heard from God. In that moment, Dalton realized that he

stood on the shoulder of his fathers pain every time he preached.

And, that if he did not strain to hear from the Father who saved him,

he would waste the sacrifice and pain of his father who raised him.

And when the hour comes that he must speak, he ought,

before he opens his mouth, to lift up a thirsty soul to God, to drink

in what he is about to pour forth, and to be himself filled with

what he is about to distribute.

Augustine

2000 Steven Smith

Steven Smith is a pastor and conference speaker who sees threads

of theology and philosophy woven through the stories of our lives.

Courtesy of

The Center for the Study of Faith and Culture

College of Communication and the Arts

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id=31544&columnid=3801

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Preaching, What Is the Objective?

- 9/2007.101

EMOTIONS BELIEFS BEHAVIOR

Confirm 1 2 3

Challenge 4 5 6

Change 7 8 9

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Sermons - Attitude Concerning Evaluation

- 9/2007.101

1. I Will Not Be Offended by My Evaluator.

2. If My Evaluator Did Not Understand Some Part of My Message, the

Fault Is Probably Mine.

Did I make myself clear. Was it organization? Was it the vocabulary?

Was it a lack of adequate illustration? Whatever the problem, it is my

fault. Lack of clarity is a major public speaking flaw and must be

corrected before worrying

3. The Evaluator Is Probably Intelligent, Perceptive and Candid.

4. I Will Seriously Consider Every Suggestion or Criticism.

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Not Enough Preaching on Sex

9/2007.101

Not Enough Sex

A SURVEY BY CHRISTIANITY TODAY International found that 44 percent of

churchgoers want to hear more sermons addressing sex. When asked to

identify sexually damaging issues that most affect them personally,

churchgoers chose as follows.

36% Pornography Addiction

34% Sexually Active Teenagers

33% Sex Outside Marriage

27% Abortion for Unwed Mothers

22% Homosexual Behavior

17% Sexual abuse

The 53‑page report, which shows significant differences in answers

from pastots versus answers from churchgoers, can be downloaded for a

fee at www.bdstore.com/ (search for the "Christians and Sex" Research

Report).

Leadership, Winter 2005

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Click on the order button below to download this Church Research

Report as a PDF file.

Purpose of Study

To understand and compare the sexual and marital issues affecting

today's pastors and church laity.

A few highlights from this 53‑page report

Nearly 9 in 10 pastors are counseling a parishioner on sexual issues

once a year or more.

71% of pastors and 49% of laity are "very satisfied" with their

marriage.

55% of pastors and 64% of laity would like their sexual intimacy to

be more frequent.

5% of pastors and 14% of laity have committed adultery. The primary

reason was marital dissatisfaction.

Laity respondents are more likely than pastors to confess adultery

to their spouses (45% to 20%).

Very few churches have established policies to protect pastors from

sexual temptation. The most frequent policy is to have a window in the

pastor's office door (27%).

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Study Details

The Research Department of Christianity Today International mailed

print surveys to subscribers of Christianity Today, Marriage

Partnership, and Today's Christian Woman and pastors who subscribe to

Leadership and Christianity Today in May 2003. A shorter online

version of the survey was also given to subscribers of Leadership,

Connection, Women, and Marriage email newsletters. Combined data for

both online and print respondents are presented whenever applicable.

Responses from print version included 323 completed questionnaires

from pastors and 325 completed questionnaires among church laity. For

results based on this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the

margin of sampling error is +/‑5.4 percentage for each group. In

addition we received 357 responses from pastors and 1,647 responses

from laity through the Internet. Sampling error for combined (print

and online) data is 3.8% for pastors and 2.2% for laity, both at 95%

confidence.

You have permission to make up to 1,000 copies for use in your local

church.

Research Report CR10$14.95

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What Is Your Speaking Style?

- 9/2007.101

What Is Your Speaking Style?

THE LECTURER

Probably the most common public speaking style, "the lecturer" is the

easiest model to use, but it's also the most easily abused. The

lecturer's purpose is to provide information to educate. The audience

is composed of people who want to hear the information. Emotion

doesn't enter into this speech in fact, It gets in the way. Word

choice isn't quite as critical as In other styles, although

mispronounced and misused words will grate on the audience and destroy

the speaker's credibility. Diction, however, is Important. So is

credibility. The audience must have confidence In the speaker and feel

that the speaker's Information is valid.

The best lecturers have a good vocal range and adopt a friendly

speaking style. They seem to care deeply about their message, and that

they want their audience to be equally interested In the subject. This

is conveyed by a word flow that is a little slower than ordinary

conversation. The good lecturer wants her material to be understood

and is prepared to deal with any audience questions on the topic.

Body language is usually restricted, because gestures can be

distracting in this speaking style. The good lecturer's arm movements

are generally informational their purpose is to direct the viewer's

eyes to a chart or a picture rather than to enhance words or emotion.

The real trick to making this style effective is to avoid a monotone.

While the voice volume does not vary much, the tone of words must vary

to make the lecture style effective. For a good example of how this is

used, listen to newscasters and reporters on national radio and

television stations. They all use the lecturer style of speaking,

though some are far more effective and believable than others.

Listening to the ones you find most interesting will teach you tactics

to Incorporate In your next informational speech.

THE PREACHER

The second style, "the preacher," is another specialized speaking

style often used by lawyers and those who must make an emotional

appeal to a broad group of people. They are selling an idea to people

who may be uninformed about the issue or outright hostile to the

speaker and/or the information. Those using the preacher style convey

that they hold a truth that is important to the audience; a truth the

speaker believes in passionately. It is this belief and passion that

gives this speaking style its appeal. Since the preacher style is

geared toward unsympathetic audiences, these speakers make use of body

language that includes "grouping gestures" (wider gestures, hands held

with palms upward, or hand gestures that physically "pull" the

audience into the speaker's heart or metaphorically pull the audience

together in a single, unified group) and "parental‑teaching gestures"

(finger‑pointing gestures or "hammering" gestures where the hand is

fisted and pounding the air to emphasize the point much as a parent

does in lecturing a child) The speaker's whole body is involved in

these gestures. Physical motions become more extreme as the speaker

emphasizes the main points. As the audience becomes caught up in the

message, these speakers may without losing their credibility use

motions such as running, jumping, kneeling or crouching on the stage.

Although the main focus in an emotional style is on strong vocal tone

and dramatic gestures, the preacher style also relies on well‑defined

word choices. Those who use this style most effectively use short

sentences, repeat ideas and phrases, and use a medley of metaphors and

similes to make their meaning clear. The speech should focus on one

strong (and narrowly defined) point; a point that can be summarized in

a single catchy phrase. The words should be sonorous with strong

vowels, giving an almost song‑like quality to the speech. These

speakers use a reservoir of emotionally charged keywords with a

slightly archaic sound to them, such as "abide," "share with you," and

"unto."

One of the most cherished American speakers using this style was Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Listening to his speeches will give you a feel

for the roll and thunder that is typical of this speaking form. On a

lighter note, the movie Leap of Faith with Steve Martin shows another

version of the preacher speaking style.

THE STORYTELLER

The third easily defined style is that of "the storyteller." This one

can be a challenge, as the speaker needs to become "a voice actor" and

employ great vocal variety. In the introduction, the speaker's voice

is warm and Intimate, giving the audience the impression that the

speaker is telling a story just to them. It's the sort of feeling

conveyed when a parent reads a bedtime story to a child.

The emphasis in this style is on drama. The storyteller is an actor,

presenting a piece that asks us to suspend reality and enter into an

imaginary world. The story usually is about more than one person, so

the storyteller must develop distinct voices for each character.

Vocal volume is not as important in this speaking style, and if there

is a framing narrative, it must be smooth and evenly paced to provide

contrast with the dialogue.

One flaw that can ruin an other‑ wise superb story is the use of

clichés and stock phrases. Word choice is important, and the story‑

teller should craft a set of unique and fresh metaphors for each tale.

Nothing captures the ear and the attention like an interesting turn of

phrase or analogy. Body language is not as critical in this style,

though it can certainly enhance the speech or anecdote if the speaker

"acts out" the points, as long as the body motions are not too

extreme.

This type of speech must have a climax that can be presented

succinctly in few words, and it must have a moral. Structurally, it is

like a one‑hump roller coaster with a long buildup to a high peak and

a sudden drop at the end. The speech presents a slow buildup of the

facts, then peaks in a quick conclusion. A moral is offered and the

presentation is ovef.

Radio commentator Paul Harvey is a good example of this speaking

style. His tone is warm and friendly and he uses pauses effectively to

highlight points and to add impact to the climax of each story he

tells, Storytellers on Mel Gibson's Rabbit Ears Radio Program provide

good examples of how dialogue and vocal variety enhance a speech or a

story.

As you become more familiar with these three styles, you'll notice

that they sometimes can be mixed effectively. The storyteller can use

any style within the context of the story, but it's hard to make the

preacher style and the lecturer style mesh in a single speech.

Of the many other vocal styles we use in communicating, these are the

three easiest to identify and emulate. So try on some new "vocal hats"

for your various speeches and be ready to take in the applause.

Tostmaster June 1999, pp25‑26

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10 Tips for Public Speaking

- 9/2007.101

10 Tips for Public Speaking

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and even

beneficial, but too much nervousness can be detrimental.

Here are some proven tips on how to control your butterflies and give

better presentations:

1 Know your material. Pick a topic you are interested in. Know more

about it than you include in your speech. Use humor, personal stories

and conversational language that way you won't easily forget what to

say.

2 Practice. Practice. Practice! Rehearse out loud with all equipment

you plan on using. Revise as necessary. Work to control filler words;

Practice, pause and breathe. Practice with a timer and allow time for

the unexpected.

3 Know the audience. Greet some of the audience members as they

arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.

4 Know the room. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and

practice using the microphone and any visual aids.

5 Relax. Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms

your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything.

("One one‑thousand, two one‑thousand, three one‑thousand. Pause.

Begin.) Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.

6 Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself speaking,

your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the audience

clapping it will boost your confidence.

7 Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be

interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're

rooting for you.

8 Don't apologize for any nervousness or problem the audience

probably never noticed it.

9 Concentrate on the message not the medium. Focus your attention

away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your

audience.

10 Gain experience. Mainly, your speech should represent you as an

authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the

key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the

experience you need in a safe and friendly environment.

\webpage{http://www.toastmasters.org/MainMenuCategories/FreeResources/N

eedHelpGivingaSpeech/TipsTechniques/10TipsforPublicSpeaking.aspx

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Preaching to youth

- 10/2007.101

Preaching to youth

Teens whose pastors' sermons are relevant to everyday life are more

likely to keep attending as young adults.

09.26.07 Church Leaders Intelligence Report

ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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5 Ways to Keep Preaching from Becoming Boring - Dr. Larry Moyer

5 Ways to Keep Preaching from

- 11/2007.101

Five Ways to Keep Your Preaching from Becoming Boring

Dr. Larry Moyer

President/CEO

EvanTell, Inc.

A church wanted to increase its Sunday morning attendance. They

decided to try a new marketing idea. The sign on the front lawn read,

Have trouble sleeping? We have sermons come hear one.

No preacher would want that said of his sermons here is one to sleep

by. I know of no preacher who steps into the pulpit and says, I

think Ill be boring. The unfortunate truth, though, is that many

are. So how do we keep our preaching from becoming boring?

Lets look at five ideas. These wont solve everything, but they will

be a strong start in the right direction; plus, they are all

interrelated.

1. \bold{Communicate, dont just speak

Speaking is when the words of my mouth enter the openings of your

ears. Communication is when what is understood in my mind is

understood in yours. Communicators are not boring. Only speakers are

boring. Ive never heard one person say, He is such a boring

communicator. That means everything we say has to be so

understandable, so relevant, so applicable to life where our listeners

are living that they are watching us instead of their watches.

That, in my opinion, is why preachers need to be expositors. Our

words may not be correct, meaningful, or penetrating; His Word

promises to be so. - Hebrews 4:12 - Hebrews 4:12} says, For

the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two‑edged

sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints

and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the

heart.

Your exposition of Scripture needs to be clear. The passage you

studied and tore apart, needs to be put back together before you enter

the pulpit. The pulpit is not the place to do your exegesis. Our

audiences are not impressed with how much Greek or Hebrew we know.

What they really want to know is how the passage weve studied relates

to their lives.

Thats one reason I am personally committed to speaking in such a way

that the audience could take the passage Ive spoken from plus my

entire message and reduce it to one sentence. I want them to be

thinking about that single truth as they leave the church, enter the

workplace the next day, drive home and converse with their family.

Among other things, that will assure they come back to hear what I

have to say again. Relevant truth powerfully and clearly delivered is

never boring.

If you want to keep from being boring, dont make it your goal to

speak. Make it your goal to communicate. Now, here is what that

demands.

2. \bold{Study! Study! Study! Work! Work! Work!

It takes study and work, both of which can be tiring, to put together

a good message. I became distressed years ago when I came across a

survey that revealed the average preacher spends 15 minutes of

preparation per message.

My mentor and good friend, Haddon Robinson, has said it well,

Thinking is hard work; thinking about thinking is even harder work.

As a preacher, you have to think: What is the passage of Scripture

saying? What exactly does it mean? How can I explain it in a way my

audience will understand? How can I get them to think about their

lives, their behavior, their needs, etc? Thats hard work.

Speaking takes 15 minutes of preparation. Communication involves hours

of preparation that can leave one spiritually energized and physically

weary from the work. I personally figure on at least 20 hours per

message. A good work ethic is a must in preventing you from becoming

a boring speaker.

Thats why, to keep from being a boring speaker (particularly if one

has a sizable church), he has to be a good delegator. He delegates

things to other people so he can give adequate time to study and

preparation for speaking. Remember the principle in - Acts

6 - Acts 6}. Others were given responsibilities so those teaching the

Word could give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the

Word. ( - vs. 4 - Acts 6:4})

Study and work will help you in a third area.

3. \bold{Use Great Illustrations

We are not talking to a reading generation; we are talking to a

watching one. Its been said, People think with pictures in their

head. That means to be an interesting speaker you have to use

effective illustrations, a few of which are even spiced with humor.

One way speaking has changed from 30 years ago is that the number of

illustrations needed per message has increased.

Jesus Christ was a master communicator. He communicated, not merely

spoke. How often is it said of him in the New Testament, And he

spoke to them a parable? He used stories to communicate divine

truth. Aggressively build an illustration file so that when its time

to speak, you have a whole file to draw from. Trying to find the

illustration you need without a file to choose from is difficult and

often impossible. The internet will bail you out but it will not

replace your own illustration file. If Im speaking from a passage

about discipleship, I want 20 to choose from, not two. That way, from

my vast reservoir that approaches discipleship from different angles,

I can choose the ringer, the one that fits just right.

Illustrations enliven the audience and keep you from being boring.

Understand though, its not just content that keeps you from becoming

a boring speaker. Its also how that content is delivered. Two more

ideas must be stressed.

4. \bold{Use Variety in Voice Tone and Speed

Variety in voice tone and speed is what helps to keep a message

interesting. Avoid developing a rhythm in your speaking. Use pauses

for effectiveness. At times, raise your voice for emphasis, at other

times lower it. Speak faster in one sentence and slower in another.

This allows the audience to enjoy an effective communicator; the

audience doesnt feel like theyre listening to a lecture. They are

apt to say to you, I benefit from what you say, and I also enjoy your

delivery.

5. \bold{Be Enthusiastic

Enthusiasm is engaging and contagious. If youre not excited about the

content of your message, the audience is not likely to be either. You

are not a huckster who says, Take this or leave it. Excitement

communicates, This is something that could change your life. Heres

how and why. If youre not excited about the content of your

message, the audience is not likely to be either!

Sustained enthusiasm demands physical fitness. Coach Vince Lombardi

was once asked why he drove his players so hard toward physical

fitness. He answered, Because fatigue makes cowards out of all of

us. Fatigue also produces a poor speaker. He may start out strong

in his introduction, but his lack of physical fitness produces a lack

of sustained enthusiasm. If you want to keep your speaking from

becoming boring, the discipline of a regular vigorous exercise routine

is essential.

\bold{Conclusion

These five ideas will go a long way in preventing you from becoming a

boring speaker. I personally do not know of any preacher

characterized by these five ideas that I would call boring. May God

help us to so communicate that people ignore their watches ‑ and even

forget they have one. Your people will probably want to put a sign on

the front lawn of the church that reads, Warning our pastors

sermons are so interesting, they wont allow you to sleep!

Dr. Moyer is President and CEO of Evantell, Inc. You are invited to

peruse a breadth of free or affordable materials on the resources

section of the Evantell website.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/article.asp?article=a‑Larry\_Moyer

\_11\_05\_07&ac=true

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Humor - Blind Pilot ‑ Humor

- 11/2007.101

A WOMAN was flying from Seattle to San Francisco . Unexpectedly, the

plane was diverted to Sacramento along the way. The flight attendant

explained that there would be a delay, and if the passengers wanted to

get off the aircraft the plane would re‑board in 50 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one lady who was blind. The man had

noticed her as he walked by and could tell the lady was blind because

her Seeing Eye dog lay quietly underneath the seats in front of her

throughout the entire flight.

He could also tell she had flown this very flight before because the

pilot approached her, and calling her by name, said, 'Kathy, we are in

Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch

your legs?' The blind lady replied, 'No thanks, but maybe my dog would

like to stretch his legs.'

Picture this:

All the people in the gate area came to a complete standstill when

they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with a Seeing Eye

dog!

The pilot was even wearing sunglasses. People scattered. They not only

tried to change planes, but they were trying to change airlines!

True story....

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Using Math to Preach - Ron Forseth

- 1/2008.101

Using Math to Preach

Ron Forseth

General Editor

SermonCentral.com

Here are a few Bible‑related questions to ponder:

What is significant about the year Methuselah died? (And why does it

matter?)

What was the wine worth that Jesus miraculously created at Cana?

Just how much energy was in the storm Jesus stilled on Galilee?

How hard would it be to get a camel through the eye of a needle?

What is the surface area of the Earth and how does it relate to the

Book of Revelation?

Answers to all of these questions can be capturedand preachedwith

the help of math. (I'll attempt to answer them in this article.)

Why Use Math in Preaching?

Math opens a window into God's Word and offers a great vehicle for

bringing some passages to light. I often like to use math when I

preach and teach for several reasons. Mathematical illustrations:

Engage Listeners

They draw not only those who will hear the sermon into the Word but

also myself as I study a passage. Math also fosters critical

thinkingso do some of your own critical thinking before you venture

out!

Enhance Comprehension and Communicate Visually

Mathematical pictures enhance comprehension as they give the mind of

the listener a visual handle to grasp onto when thinking about a

passage. Even if the picture is not represented by a diagram,

listeners can better "see" the illustration or passage in their mind.

Energize a Sermon

They can energize a sermon, engaging and expanding the imagination of

the listener as their own minds must consider the concepts and

calculations.

Drive Home a Point

After engaging the mind, a Scripture‑related math example can

articulate a truth and land on practical application.

Glorify God

God, the architect of a mathematical world, is lifted up when his math

is used to communicate. Math points to him as the source of order and

glory in the world. Sometimes, it blows the mind!

Here are some Scripture passages accompanied by math‑related

illustrations to bring them to life:

1. The Genealogical Timeline of the Patriarchs in - Genesis

5 - Genesis 5} and - 6 - Genesis 6} (This is the one about when

Methuselah died.)

Using math and rather specific data provided by God in

- Genesis 5 - Genesis 5} and - 6 - Genesis 6}, we can

learn some interesting insights. Let's assume that the year God

created Adam and Eve is "Absolute Year Zero." In that case, we can

carefully derive the following dates and time spans:

\* Calculated by adding the age of the patriarch at death to the

"Absolute Year" that the patriarch was born.

\* So that we don't get drawn into the assumption that all the dates

are blurry and that the Flood didn't actually happen, God gives the

exact day the Flood began. The floodwaters opened on Noah's 600th on

the 17th day of the 2nd month ( - Genesis 7:11 - Genesis

7:11}). Noah lived 350 years beyond the Flood. Interestingly,

Abraham was born right about the time of Noah's death, 2,000 years

after Creation and 2,000 years before Christ. Don't you find that

interesting?

\* I once read a book by Watchman Nee that demonstrated that the years between Creation and the birth of Christ could be traced and accounted for through the chapters of the Old Testament. The calculations above were from "original" research I've done over the years.

Three important observations from our math in Genesis:

The Flood of Noah occurred in "Absolute Year" 1,656.

The oldest patriarch, Methuselah, lived 969 years. (Noah was second

at 950 years.)

Methuselah died in "Absolute Year" 1656the exact year of the Flood!

If Methuselah had died in the year 1666 at the age of 979ten years

after the Floodthat would mean that he lived through the Flood though

he wasn't on the Ark. In that case, we'd have a significant problem

related to the dependability of the Bible. But as can be carefully

calculated from the data provided in Genesis, Methuselah died in the

exact year of the Flood. (Perhaps he died and God sent the Floodor

perhaps he had left the righteous path and perished in the Flood. Who

knows? Without the flood, he may have lived more than 1,000 years!)

Preaching Point: The Bible is an amazing book!

Evangelistic Point: If Noah's Flood were to happen today, would you

find yourself covered with water or safe in the Ark?

2. The Sabbath Rest of - Genesis 2 - Genesis 2} and

- Exodus 20 - Exodus 20

God wisely and compassionately prescribes that we are to rest a day a

week. If we were to take a day a week and live for 70 years, we would

accumulate 3,640 days of rest for a total of 120 months. Which of us

would not like to have 10 years of vacation in a lifetime? God's made

provision for just that!

Preaching Point: Even as he expects our worship, God is looking out

for our interest!

Evangelistic Point: Have you entered the "rest of God" which doesn't

just offer 120 months of rest, but far more than 120 million joyous

years of rest?

3. The New Jerusalem Described in - Revelation

21 - Revelation 21

We are told in Revelation that the New Jerusalem will come down out of

heaven. It will be quite a sight. John describes the city dimensions

as 1,400 miles wide, 1,400 miles long, and 1,400 miles high. That is,

the base of the New Jerusalem will be 1,960,000 square miles. This is

almost exactly 1% of the Earth's surface\*. At its base, the New

Jerusalem will be more than half the size of the United States (55%,

actually).\*

If each "story" in this gigantic structure is a mile in height, the

accumulated surface area of the New Jerusalem will be 2,744,000,000

square miles (more than 15 times the surface area of the Earth!) \*\*

Of course we don't know how many people will be in the New Jerusalem,

but let's say God brings one billion people into the city (obviously

not a universalist positionsee - Matthew 7:13‑14 - Matthew

7:13‑14}). In the case of a billion, every person could be allocated

2.7 square miles a piece. That's 1,756 acres each!

Venturing further into "sanctified imagination," I like to think of

the Tree of Life being the full 1,400 mile height of the structure and

spreading its glorious fruit to every corner of the city.

Preaching Point: There will be plenty of room in the New Jerusalem

for as many as believe! The vision of the city is an immeasurable

encouragement for believers as they anticipate glory. (See also

- Ephesians 3:20‑21 - Ephesians 3:20‑21 - - 1

Corinthians 2:9‑10 - 1 Corinthians 2:9‑10}.)

Evangelistic Point: The glory of the heavenly city is for those who

trust Christ. Leave your sins behind and receive the incredible grace

of God!

Notes on Math Example #3:

\*I'm told that Randy Alcorn has done some similar calculations in his

book Heaven. If you want to explore this more, it's supposed to be

the comprehensive work on the subject. The surface area of the Earth

is 196,939,900 square miles. I've got a suspicion that when we

understand the unit of measure John uses in Revelation it actually

will be 1%. We'll just have to see when we get there.

\*\*If the stories were a standard 10 feet in height, the surface area

of the New Jerusalem would be far more than half the surface area of

the Sun or 7,357 times the land area of the United States. (The

surface area of the United States is 3,548,974 square miles and the

surface area of the Sun is 2,355,223,167,106.) The accumulated

surface area of all the stories in the New Jerusalem would be

1,448,832,000,000 square miles (over a trillion square miles). I

doubt God will pack us in so tightly. So, the "mile‑high stories" is

a more likely scenario. I also doubt the city will be so mundane as

to have stories all the same height.

4. The Widow's Mite in - Luke 21 - Luke 21

If the widow gave two cents (two copper coins) and let's say the

wealthy hypocrites each gave $50 into the platethat would be 5,000

pennies. Add all the pennies in $50 and divide by two. The

hypocrites gave gifts of 2,500 times the amount of the widow. Yet,

Jesus preferred her gift to theirs. Why?

Preaching Point: God is more interested in the depth of our

commitment than the breadth of our gifts.

Evangelistic Point: You can't buy your way into heaven.

5. Jesus Turns the Water into Fine Wine in - John 2 - John 2

The six stone jars equaled approximately 25 gallons each or 150

gallons total. This is the equivalent of 427 bottles of wine. The

passage is clear that it was top quality wine. At the great price of

ten dollars a bottle, this would be a $4,270 gift to the wedding

party.

Preaching Point: Jesus is both powerful and generous! (And wine

itself can be a blessing.)

Evangelistic Point: When was the last time you met someone who could

change water to wine? Jesus is the one to believe in!

6. The Gates of Pearl in the New Jerusalem in - Revelation

21:21 - Revelation 21:21

John reveals that there will be 12 gates into the heavenly city, each

made of a single, large pearl. With a billion people going in and out

of the gates, the gate will need to be rather sizeable. But let's be

conservative and say that the gates (and pearls) are only 30 feet

wide. If using a pound for pound comparison to the value of the

world's largest pearl (10 inches across\*), one of the gates carved

from a pearl would be valued in 2007 U.S. dollars would be $2.8

trillion. Multiplied by 12 gates, this value would calculate to $34

trillion. So, how much value is that? More than the annual

productivity of all the people in every country in the entire world!

Preaching Point: Heaven will be exquisite, beyond imagination. If

Jesus took six days to create the world ( - John 1:3 - John

1:3}) but has potentially spent 2,000 years ( - John

14:2‑3 - John 14:2‑3}) building the New Jerusalem, you'll want a

glimpse of what he's built!

Evangelistic Point: Do what you can to get into heaven!

\*Note: Never mind that the quality of the world's largest pearl is

rather poor but still valued at approximately $60 million.

7. Jesus Calms the Storm in - Mark 4 - Mark 4

The disciples were facing a storm in a boat about to capsize. They

feared they would perish. Jesus stands up and commands the storm to

be still?! How much power is that? Again, let's be conservative.

The Sea of Galilee is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. The passage

indicates that the storm was rather fierce. Let's assume that it was

blowing at a force of 20 pounds per square foot. If the face of the

storm blowing across the Sea of Galilee was only the width of the sea

and just 100 feet tall, then the force of the wind would equal

4,224,000 pounds.

Preaching Point: Jesus is God! Rejoice he's on your side!

Evangelistic Point: Jesus is God! Be sure to get right with him!

Other Example Passages

A few other passages you might explore, making your own estimations

and calculations and preaching points. (Hint: Many desktop

calculators don't have enough digits for big numbers. The calculator

installed as a standard accessory program on most PCs has far more

capacity):

The Great Commission: If there was only one Christian in the world,

and that person led two people to Christ in a year and those two each

led two to Christ in a year, and so on, how many years would it take

to reach all six billion people on earth?

Feeding of the 5,000: If there were 5,000 men each with three family

members at Jesus' feeding of the crowd and each person in the crowd

got the equivalent of three $1 items off the McDonald's value menu,

what would the bill have been for feeding that many people?

Space on Noah's Ark: Given that the ark was approximately 450 feet

long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, how many cubic feet were within

the ark? If the average size animal on the ark (ranging from a

mosquito to an elephant) was the size of a typical sheep and each pair

of animals was given the average space of 5 feet wide by 6 feet long

by 3 feet high for living and storing food), how many different pairs

of animals could fit on the ark? (Don't worry about bumble bees and

killer bees, Great Danes and Chihuahuas, quarter horses and

thoroughbreds. One type of each animal will do as the derivative

breeds will naturally develop over time)

The Heavens Declare the Gory of God in - Psalm 19 - Psalms

19}: The expanse of our own solar system is enough to shout his

glory, besides the amazing distances between stars and galaxies. As

light travels 186,000 miles a second and earth is 93 million miles

from the Sun, how long will it take for a ray of light to cross the

distance between the Earth and the Sun? What if it was an airplane

flying at 600 miles an hour? Pluto is 3.7 billion miles from the

Sun. How long would it take for that plane to travel from the Sun to

Pluto? What if a person walked that distance at the brisk pace of

three miles an hour?

The Value of Reaching One Soul in - Luke 15 - Luke 15}:

Assume that each person averages a lifespan of 100 years and that 100

billion people have lived on earth. It could be more but probably far

less. If we strung together all the total years of all the people

whoever lived, how long would the string be in accumulated years? The

new rendition of Amazing Grace states "When we've been there 10

trillion years, bright shining as the sun" What's greater, all the

years of all the people from all of historyor a single soul living

the first 10 trillion years in eternity? How serious should we be

about steering people from their course away from God back to an

eternity with him?

A Camel through a Needle's Eye in - Matthew 19 - Matthew 19}:

If you were to flatten a 7‑foot‑high, 950‑pound camel displacing 54

cubic feet down to a thread of 1/16th of an inch in diameter, how long

would that thread be. Hint: This is a more challenging math problem

and the answer is the thread would be very, very long! Question:

Does it makes sense to squeeze a camel through the eye of a needle or

find a different way to get to your destination?

Tips for Using Math to Preach

A few additional thoughts for using math effectively in preaching:

You won't use math in every sermon you preach, but keep an eye out for

opportunities to bring a passage to light using math and creativity.

It's important at the start to make clear any underlying assumptions.

For example, use the phrase, "Let's say" For instance, "Let's say

that each story' in the New Jerusalem is a mile high. Or "Let's say

that each the value of a pound of a pearl is"

The use of math is not always an exact science. Often it's a tool for

giving a context for a passage or story.

Do your research. Scripture, a good calculator, Google.com,

Wikipedia.com, Encarta.com and other sites are of great help.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself. You're not a scientist and

your hearers will understand that. The use of calculus is not

necessary!

When precise figures are not available, it is useful to estimate in a

way that is consistent with reality. When estimating, always be

conservative.

It's important to guard against exaggeration unless it's obvious that

you're exaggerating with hyperbole.

Be sure to bring home the point with a practical application. You

don't want your listeners to be left asking the question, "So what?"

When pertinent, enjoy the process of using math in your preaching!

Ron Forseth is the General Editor of SermonCentral.com. He studied

for two years with Wycliffe Bible Translators' Summer Institute of

Linguistics and has a Master's degree in English from Colorado State

University. Ron has a passion for sharing Christ and to see all people

groups of the world reached with the Gospel. He served for several

years as a college pastor in Colorado and in Christian service for

most of the 1990s in China and Mongolia. He is also Vice President of

Outreach, Inc., an organization dedicated to inviting and connecting

every person in America to a Bible‑believing church so that they might

have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He lives with his

wife and two teenage children in Vista, California.

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Deciding What to Preach - Is There a Formula for Deciding What to Preach? By Andrew Davis

1/2008.101

Is there a formula for deciding what to preach?

By Andrew Davis

Dr. Andrew Davis is Senior Pastor of First Baptist Durham in Durham,

N.C. Andy is a graduate of Duke, Gordon‑Conwell, and The Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary.

There is no formula for deciding what to preach and when to preach

it, but such a decision should be guided in both the long and

short‑term by Gods openly stated goals in this world: to glorify

Himself, and to do so by growing the church of Jesus Christ both in

number and in spiritual maturity. Since it is God alone who can

accomplish this two‑fold growth, and since He has already declared

that He will use the God‑breathed Scripture ( - 2 Timothy

3:16 - 2 Timothy 3:16}) both to make you wise for salvation through

faith in Christ Jesus, ( - 2 Timothy 3:15 - 2 Timothy 3:15})

and to thoroughly equip the man of God for every good work

( - 2 Timothy 3 - 2 Timothy 3}: 17), the preachers main job is

to open that Scripture up to his people clearly and effectively week

by week. Since ALL Scripture is useful for these two forms of

growth, and especially for glorifying the God who alone makes things

grow ( - 1 Corinthians 3:7 - 1 Corinthians 3:7}), it doesnt

matter as much what you preach as HOW you preach. Preach always in

such a way that God is glorified as a majestic, powerful, sovereign

Emperor who is the shield and the very great reward of His people

( - Genesis 15:1 - Genesis 15:1} the very chapter in which

Abram is justified by faith!). Preach always in such a way that Gods

words are made clear and Gods message comes straight from the text.

Charles Spurgeon had inscribed on his pulpit so only he could see it,

Step aside, Sir, that they may see Jesus. To that marvelous concept

I would add, Step aside, Sir, that they may understand Gods word.

Having given that general exhortation, however, there are some

guidelines for long‑range planning of preaching which depend upon the

maturity of your congregation. If your congregation is new to faithful

expository preaching, try to give them a balanced diet of various

genres of Scripture over your first two years or so: some Old

Testament history, some Gospel, some New Testament epistle, some

prophetic books, some Hebrew poetry. Do this by expositing specific

books for a few months and moving on. Get this book (or section of a

book) right, then go to the next book (or section). This avoids the

danger of topical preaching in which you are merely opening your mind

on prayer, evangelism, stewardship, family issues, etc. Topical

preaching is the opposite of expository preaching, for you are making

the Scriptures say what you think they say, rather than letting them

simply speak for themselves. Amazingly, if you simply move passage by

passage through various books of the Bible, in two years time, you

will hit almost every key topic they need to hear, and many of them

several times. As your congregation gets more acclimated to careful

expository preaching, you may want to settle in to a more detailed and

lengthy handling of a particular book of the Bible. Even there,

however, its probably best not to get too bogged down. Its easy to

begin preaching careful verse‑by‑verse exposition, but end up being

topical because each verse opens up its own topic. This is to be

avoided. Also, try to give the people a sense of the majestic grandeur

of Gods whole revelation to humanity: how this passage fits into the

whole revelation of God.

One final word concerns emergency situations. There may well be some

immensely pressing event that comes into the life of your congregation

which forces you to leave your sermon series for a time to address

that situation. Perhaps a flood has left half of them homeless;

perhaps a war has broken out which is claiming the lives of their

children; perhaps they are farmers and a blight has destroyed their

livelihood. This is not some current event which people are talking

about, but something which affects their very lives. Then it may be

wise to address it from Gods word. But this is the exception rather

than the rule. For the most part, settle in and preach passage after

passage faithfully as the Holy Spirit leads you from book to book for

however many weeks He leads you to stay there. Pray and ask for the

specific books and the number of weeks. His guidance and your faithful

exposition of the series of texts to which He guides you will feed

Christs lambs the nourishment they need.

Some recommended books on this:

John R.W. Stott, The Preachers Portrait, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans,

1979);

D. Martyn Lloyd‑Jones, Preaching and Preachers (Grand Rapids,

Zondervan, 1972);

John MacArthur, Preaching in his Rediscovering Pastoral Minisry:

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How To Make Every Sermon Count - Preparing Your Heart And Mind To Hear God's Word by Donald S. Whitney

Issue #106 July/August 1998

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How To Make Every Sermon Count

Preparing Your Heart And Mind To Hear God's Word.

by Donald S. Whitney Issue #106 July/August 1998

It's Sunday morning. Your pastor strides to the pulpit. During the

sermon, you'll invest 25 to 45 minutes of your time listening to what

he has to say. How can you benefit most from this important

investment? What can you do to get the most out of the sermon?

James 1:2122 teaches us what to do before, during, and after hearing

God's Word: "Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that

remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which

is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word,

and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (NASB).

Heart Preparation

We need to prepare our hearts before we can hear God speak through a

sermon. James' phrase "filthiness and all that remains of wickedness"

refers generally to any type of sin. When James writes of "putting

[it] aside," he uses a term that describes taking off an old, dirty

coat and laying it aside. In other words, he counsels, the best way to

prepare to hear from a holy God is to put away anything in your life

that is unholy.

The Greek word translated in verse 21 as "wickedness" is used outside

the New Testament for the wax that forms in the ear. Sin is like that.

It can block our spiritual ears so that we cannot hear what God is

saying to us. The Lord may be speaking clearly through the sermon, and

yet we may not hear Him.

Putting aside sin requires us to examine our hearts, looking for

anything in our lives that would hamper our spiritual hearing. Before

you go to church, carve out a few minutes to pray for your ability to

receive what you hear. Ask God to search your heart. He may place His

finger on a particular sin. If so, confess it, and ask the Lord not to

let it impede your intake of truth. Pray that God would help you

overcome common Sunday morning problems that interfere with listening

to the sermon, such as anger toward a family member who made you late.

Any sin that comes to mind should prompt confession and repentance in

order to better hear God's pure and holy Word.

Listening with Humility

The second half of verse 21 describes our responsibility during a

sermon: "in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save

your souls." James is writing to those in whom the Word of God has

already been implanted by God (see v. 18), that is, to believers in

Christ. So when he speaks of the "saving of the soul," James is

referring to the ongoing process of sanctificationbecoming more like

Christin each believer's life.

What does it mean to receive the Word in humility? To listen with

humility, we must remember that we are coming to hear the Word of God,

not just a pastor's sermon. Often, we may get hung up on superficial

things that distract us. Perhaps we don't like a certain pastor's

preaching style or some annoying mannerism. We must not let such

personal issues derail our attention to the preaching of God's Word.

When we listen with humility, we're more alert for the message of God

than for flaws in the messenger or his delivery. Not every word the

preacher speaks will be divinely inspired by God. But if your pastor's

sermons are based on the Bible, then you are hearing the Word of God.

God is speaking, and He is speaking to you.

To receive the Word of God in humility also means to think about how

it applies to us individually. With some issues, we may be tempted to

think that the sermon doesn't have much to do with us. We may even

pridefully think, "This sermon is for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not me." But we need

to humbly acknowledge that every sermon is for each of us. This is

even true for topics and passages we've heard preached many times and

assume that we know well. Instead of thinking, I know this already, we

need to ask the Lord to give us deeper insight and fresh ideas about

how to apply familiar truths to our lives. Because every verse used in

the sermon was inspired by God (see - 2 Tim. 3:16 - 2 Timothy

3:16}), we should assume that there is some way to apply it to our

lives.

The Apostle Paul was exhilarated by how the people of Thessalonica

responded to his preaching. "And we also thank God continually

because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us,

you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the

word of God, which is at work in you who believe" ( - 1 Thess.

2:13 - 1 Thessalonians 2:13}). These people heard what Paul preached

and said to themselves, God is speaking to me.

The gospel is described as a seed that grows when it's in a receptive

environment. Listening with humility means allowing God's Word to take

root in your soul and life. Jesus used this analogy in the parable of

the soils (see Lk. 8:415). The Word of God that is sown during a

sermon will only flourish in a heart with receptive soil.

Unfortunately, the hearts of many who hear the Word are hard packed,

and the Word finds no receptivity. With others, the thorns of earthly

concerns will choke out the fruitfulness of the Word. But some, those

described as "good soil," will receive the Word, and an abundant

harvest of fruit will result. The way we receive the Word of God as it

is preached indicates the kind of soil we are.

Applying what you hear

James then exhorts his readers to respond obediently to the Word

they've humbly received. "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and

not merely hearers who delude themselves" ( - Jas. 1:22,

NASB) - James 1:22 NASB}. Our responsibility after the sermon is to

intentionally apply God's Word. While a good preacher demonstrates the

application of his sermon text to various kinds of hearers, it is

impossible for him to personalize the application for everyone.

Ultimately, we must take the initiative to apply what we hear and thus

"prove [ourselves] doers of the word, and not merely hearers."

Make it your goal to determine at least one response to every

scripturally sound sermon you hear. The most appropriate response to

many sermons may be confession, praise, or thanksgiving. Maybe a

sermon has challenged what you believe about a particular verse or

doctrine, and you need to think about and study the issue further on

your own. Perhaps you were convicted to reconcile a relationship,

confront someone who's wronged you, or confess a sin against an

individual. Perhaps there is a habit to break or to start. If no

application of the message seems obvious, think about how the sermon

might apply in different areas of your life, such as home, work,

church, school, finances, etc.

Ezekiel spoke about the importance of intentionally applying the Word.

God warned Ezekiel that some who claim to be His people and want to

hear His Word would respond to the prophet's message by saying to each

other,

"Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord." My people

come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your

words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they

express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed,

to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a

beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words

but do not put them into practice.

Ezk. 33:3033

God was displeased with these people because, despite hearing the

words of His spokesman, they didn't "put them into practice." They did

not consider God's words any more important than an entertainer's

("one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an

instrument well"). Hearing God's Word without doing it is dangerous.

According to - Jas. 1:22 - James 1:22}, it is a delusion to

think that mere exposure to the truth, and perhaps admiration of it,

is sufficient. In - verse 25 - James 1:25}, James emphasizes

that it is not the man who forgets what he has heard, but he who does

it that will be blessed.

Do you have ears to hear?

If you had a weekly meeting with your boss and coworkers to discuss

priorities for the coming week, you would do your part to get ready

for the meeting. During the meeting, you would pay attention to what

your boss had to say. When the meeting was finished, you would go back

over your notes and action items and get to work on your assignments.

Or imagine that you have a weekly appointment with a golf or tennis

pro, or maybe a music lesson. During the week, you would practice

diligently to master the skills your instructor taught you in your

last session. During your half hour with the instructor, you would

soak in everything your teacher told you. From then on, you would try

to apply all you had heard.

Do you take the preaching of the Wordthe Word of God Almighty, the

One who created us and who determines our eternal destinyas seriously

as a weekly appointment with a boss, a coach, a counselor, or a

customer? We should prepare for these kinds of meetings, but we also

need to prepare to meet with God. As Jesus said, "He who has ears to

hear, let him hear" ( - Mt. 11:15, RSV) - Matthew 11:15 RSV}.

We must remember the critical responsibility each of us has to humbly

receive the Word as it is preached and respond in obedience to it.

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About the author:

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Good Sermon or Great One - Kenton C. Anderson

Good Sermon 2 a Great One

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Good Sermon 2 a Great One

How to Craft a Good Sermon or a Great One

Kenton C. Anderson

Trinity Western University

Most people can recognize a good sermon when they hear one, though

they might have difficulty articulating why. For those of us who try

to preach those "good sermons," it is useful to understand what it

takes to get those positive responses from our listeners.

Of course, listeners vary and have different things that they are

looking for in a preacher. A listener's theology will determine his or

her sense of the sermon. Those who are committed to a high view of

Scripture might expect something different than one committed to a

more active view of the work of the Holy Spirit. Learning style is a

factor in considering the effectiveness of a sermon. Some listeners

learn best through reflection; others prefer a more active and

participatory approach. Culture will affect one's evaluation of a

sermon. Where we come from, what generation we belong to, our

denomination, our economic situation and our gender all play a part in

determining the kind of preacher we best respond to.

Still, if preaching is preaching, there are certain things that can be

said across the board. If the following things are in place, we can be

fairly confident that our sermons will be well‑appreciated and lead to

the kinds of responses we expect. These, then, are the factors that

result in "good" and maybe even "great" preaching.

A good sermon is rooted in the Bible. A sermon ought to find its

footing in the Word of God. Many fine things could be said by a

preacher, but if the listener doesn't feel that the sermon has been

helpful in engaging the Bible, it falls short as a sermon. This means

that the Bible will be used as more than window dressing or as a

jumping‑off point. The Bible will govern the sermon and be the source

of its big idea if the sermon is any good. Good preachers understand

that God still speaks through his Word. The Bible is the one

instrument that God has promised to bless. When it comes to good

preaching, the Bible is where the power is.

A good sermon helps people hear from God. This is as helpful a

definition of preaching as I know. Preachers work to connect people

with the voice of God. If a listener does not sense that she or he has

been in the presence of God and heard something meaningful from him,

then the sermon could not have been that good. As such, the sermon

does not have to fit any particular pre‑fab form. The sermon as a

medium can flex to respond to the interests and concerns of any

culture and situation. If it helps people hear what God is saying, it

is a good sermon, regardless of the preacher's style. This underlines,

of course, a dependence on the Scriptures.

A good sermon will be easily understood. Some preachers seem to

confuse complexity with depth. In my experience, it is the simple

truths that are the most profound. Listeners can understand good

preaching. Good preachers work to understand the language, the

culture, and the interests of those to whom they preach. They work

hard to clarify and unify the presentation so that there will be no

confusion about what they are trying to say. In most cases, good

sermons offer one idea an idea big enough yet simple enough for

listeners to appreciate and apply to their lives.

A good sermon exalts the person of Jesus Christ. We are Christian

preachers, which means that every sermon we preach will exalt the

person of Jesus Christ. While not every text is directly

Christological, I believe that every sermon ought to be. What are we

saying that a Jewish priest couldn't say? What are we offering that

goes beyond what people hear on Oprah? At the end of the day,

Christian preachers offer Jesus Christ as the hope of mankind. A good

sermon will be sure to make that clear.

These four principles apply to any good sermon I have ever heard. A

good sermon will integrate the person and presence of God with the

person and presence of the preacher. The divine and the human

collaborate in the mystery that is good preaching.

In terms of the content of good preaching, I would suggest four

elements that ought to be present in one form or another whenever we

preach. While people are individual and unique, the basic needs of

human beings are universal. Preachers can help their people if they

pay attention to a few basic elements

Tell a Story: Every text in Scripture has a story because it is always

written in the context of real people and real situations. Preachers

need to help their listeners connect with the humanity in the Bible in

order to see the relevance of what God wants to say. Good preaching,

then, places the sermon in the context of real human experience. It

tells the stories of actual people in real time so that contemporary

listeners can locate their own life in the context of the sermon.

Make an Argument: The Bible is also about ideas. Good preachers will

teach the listener the truths that can help them live in accordance

with God's will. God challenges people with an alternative approach to

understanding and living life. People will grow in their faith if they

are led to understand the propositions of God's word. Preachers need

to work to help listeners appreciate the reasons for their faith.

Solve a Mystery: Preaching needs to respond to the deep‑seated

questions people have for God. We can't accept that just because

listeners understand what we are saying that they are prepared to give

their lives. While we might not always like the things we hear,

preachers need to help their listeners struggle with the mysteries.

Paint a Picture: Sermons ought to offer listeners a compelling vision

of the future. Preachers need to show listeners how their encounter

with God's word can change their lives forever. What will it actually

look like in our lives because we have heard from God and responded to

him in faith? Can we motivate listeners to respond faithfully to the

things we have heard from God?

Preaching that integrates these four features will offer the authority

of God's word while respecting the dignity of the human listener. It

will nourish the listener's mind, while at the same time, speak to the

listener's heart. People of all cultures and levels of experience can

be encouraged to hear from God and grow in their faith as a result.

Of course it could be said that aspiring to "good" preaching doesn't

take us far enough. We ought to be pursuing preaching that is "great."

No doubt the move from good to great would be preferred. It may even

be possible if we are willing to make the effort and if God has given

us the necessary gifting. For now, however, I would be satisfied to

hear a lot more of what is good than the "fair‑to‑middling" preaching

I hear so often.

My sense is that listeners tend to be gracious people. If we can

faithfully help them into the presence of God each week, our listeners

will be grateful. Here's to all the good preachers who do just that,

faithfully serving to help people hear from God.

You are invited to read more from Dr. Anderson in his article, An

Integrative Model for Preaching.

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Preaching - Stedman - Expository Preaching Resources

- 2/2008.101

Expository Preaching Resources

1. Powerful Expository Preaching Series, by Ray Stedman

Part 1: The Glory of Preaching

Part 2: Preparation of Expository Sermons

Part 3: The Accountability of the Preacher

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1. Powerful Expository Preaching, Part 1

The Glory of Preaching

By Ray Stedman, Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, CA. Delivered at

the first Congress on the Bible, San Diego, 1982

I want you this morning to zero in on the power and the glory of

preaching. And this will be more or less a lecture presentation this

morning. The size of this group precludes any reaction from you,

though I never like to exclude that and I always welcome any questions

that you might want to ask. So if you have something you would like to

present in the line as we go on in this, feel perfectly free to raise

your hand. I will recognize it, and we'll see if we can't deal at

least briefly with that. But do understand a group of this size makes

that difficult. But at tomorrow's session like this I want to take you

into what would be a kind of a practical workshop on preparing to

preach, expositorily. That is, how to do exposition. What happens in

the study. How long it takes, and what steps you go through. And I

want to make this as practical as I can. And of course you understand

that I must of necessity share a good deal of my own practice in this

regard, because that is where I am most aware. In the third session, I

would like to address to the accountability of a preacher. This

morning the responsibility, the next hour the methods, and then

finally the accountability of preachers. And I would like to do this

primarily working out of a passage that has been a great help to me in

my own ministry.

I now ‑‑ as you were just reminded ‑‑ have been 32 years in the church

that I have been serving in the San Francisco Bay area, Peninsula

Bible Church. And I came fresh out of Dallas Seminary to that

congregation, it wasn't even a congregation when I came. It was just a

Sunday evening fellowship time. But it rapidly grew into a church, and

through the course of the years I have been trying to learn how to

preach. And all I want to try to do with you is share some of the

things I did learn and some of the things I've picked up from others,

and some of the deep convictions of my heart that have come about in

the process. Having come to a congregation without any previous

experience myself as a pastor I have had to try to learn the business

of preaching from observation of other men, from reading their

ministry and learning from that, and from the study of the Scriptures

themselves about the themes of preaching. And it is that that I would

like to share with you as much as possible today.

One of the passages that has meant very much to me as a guideline

along this line is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 1st

Corinthians chapter 2 and then chapter 4. I would like to begin with

chapter 4, where the apostle is summing up his own ministry as a

preacher. As you know ‑‑ I'm sure many of you are familiar with these

letters ‑‑ they are very relevant to our own time. I just not long ago

finished preaching through the two Corinthian letters, and I have

frequently referred to them in my own congregation as first and second

Californians, because I believe that we live in Corinthian conditions

here in California. Corinth was not quite as degraded as California

is, but almost. And what they had to face we have to face. And

therefore these are most up to date and relevant passages. And I found

therefore the words of the apostle to the Corinthians were most

helpful in dealing with the conditions that we have to face today.

Now in these first three chapters the apostle is dealing with the

divisions in the church at Corinth, and with their view of Christian

ministers. And as you know they were divided up as many people are

today following after certain pet preachers. Some liked Paul ‑‑ he was

the founder of the church, and they held to him, and were loyal to him

as a preacher of the truth; some liked Peter, who had evidently come

through, and a certain segment found him to be tremendously

significant in their lives, probably because he was one of the

original twelve apostles whom the Lord himself had chosen. Paul could

not claim to have associated with the Lord in the days of his flesh,

so Peter in their eyes had a bit of an edge over Paul. And then there

were those who loved the eloquence of Apollos, and they gathered about

him, appreciating the rhetoric with which he spoke, the ease and the

oratory that he exhibited. So there were stylists in that day, and

there were loyalists, and there were purists; there was the group that

said, "We like Christ! A plague on all these others! We go back to the

Lord himself, and we only take his words!" And so the church was

divided over this.

You find the same kind of divisions today. In almost every

congregation there are those who have their pets; they only listen to

certain men, their tapes, their books are what they read. And you can

hear people talk like they did in Corinth in almost every church

today. Now Paul says this is all wrong. This is evidence of carnality,

of immaturity, and he sets in contrast to it his own view of the

ministry. That is why this passage has been very meaningful to me.

In chapter 4 he begins with these words: "This is how one should

regard us: as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of

God. Moreover," he says, "it is required of stewards that they be

found faithful." Now I have been greatly strengthened in that,

especially in taking the two words the apostle uses of Christian

ministers, and trying to understand fully what he means by the words.

The word "servant" is an unusual word, it is not the ordinary word

doulos or douloi that is frequently employed. It is a word rather

infrequently employed, it is huperetes, the under rower. They are the

servants of Christ. And then the word for "stewards" is an interesting

word; oikonomos, the "housekeepers," the ones in charge of a

household.

Now I think in these two terms the apostle has gathered up the word

that describes, first, the accountability of a pastor or a preacher.

He is a servant, an underrower of Christ; I want to look at that fully

on Friday morning. And then the second word which I would like to zero

in on today is the word "steward:" a steward of the mysteries of God.

I find that to be one of the most challenging statements in the New

Testament. And it is a theme that is developed more fully in many of

the other books of the New Testament. Our Lord spoke of it; "A good

steward," he said, "is one who takes things out of his treasury, both

new and old." And the apostle speaks of this very frequently. A

steward, of course, is one who has been entrusted with certain

commodities which he is responsible to dispense to others. When I flew

down here yesterday on the plane (as I am sure many of you experienced

as well) there were stewardesses ‑‑ or as in the case of many airlines

today since men are demanding equal rights with women, there were

stewards on many airplanes. Now an airline steward is almost exactly

fulfilling the role that is expressed here in this word from the New

Testament. An airline steward is responsible to dispense both

information and certain commodities to the passengers: They tell you

where to sit, how to buckle your belt, where the restrooms are, where

to smoke, where not to smoke, and so on, they give you arrival

information and so forth; and furthermore they have trays of food and

of beverages which they dispense to those who are passengers on the

plane.

Now that is exactly the idea that is here. A minister of Christ, a

preacher of the word, is a steward, he has been entrusted with

something. You remember how the apostle in writing to Timothy speaks

in several of his letters, he says, "Guard the deposit that has been

entrusted to you." And he speaks in other places of the necessity to

preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, the treasure that is given

into our care. Peter speaks about the exceeding great and precious

promises which have been entrusted to us ‑‑ not for our own enjoyment,

but to give out to others. And all through the New Testament this

theme is enlarged upon. Peter calls it the "oracles of God." And you

remember in that amazing 13th chapter of Matthew, our Lord spoke to

the disciples in rather startling terms, and said that they were

chosen of God to be made stewards (he doesn't use this term there, but

the idea is there), stewards of the things which have been kept secret

since the foundation of the world.

Now I think all these phrases should challenge us to view our ministry

as preachers of the word of God at a very high level indeed. And it is

one that I have taken very seriously in my own ministry. I find

nothing is more challenging to me than the thought of dispensing these

amazing concepts from Scripture to my congregation. I count it the

highest honor of my life that I was ever privileged to be put by God

into such a ministry. And rather than reflecting many of the ideas

that are around today about the irrelevance of the church, and the

uselessness of the church, I find that these concepts and these

phrases highlight for me the extreme relevance of the church.

It would be interesting if we had time this morning to know what

flashes into your mind when you hear the term, "a minister," or

perhaps more purposefully what flashes into the minds of the people in

your congregation when they hear the word, "a minister;" or even more

to the point, what crosses the minds of the people out here in the

streets of San Diego when they hear the term, "a minister of Christ."

I was talking with Os Guinness not long ago. I was in England and

visited with him at Oxford University where he is doing some doctoral

work right now (this week he is up in our area, in the Bay Area, doing

some ministry) ‑‑ but I was asking Os what is the attitude of the

students there at Oxford about Christian things. "Well it is

interesting, you know" he said. "I asked one of my professors the

other day who is not a Christian. I asked him, What do thinking

non‑Christians think about Christian thinking?' And his answer was,

Not very much.'" And I think that is the standard approach of many

today with regard to the church; it is not regarded as an influential

body at all in our country any more; its opinions are not asked for,

its declarations are not listened to; when it raises its voice it is

either ridiculed or ignored.

I read a recent contemporary description of the church put in rhyme by

a contemporary secular writer, who put it this way:

Outwardly splendid as of old,

Inwardly sparkless, void, and cold;

Her force and fire all spent and gone

Like the dead moon she still shines on.

Well, that is the way a lot of people are thinking about the church.

And the reason is because they really haven't heard Christian

thinking, even in church. What they often get, as Jim Boice said so

well this morning, is a kind of a watered down, bland, pabulum. A

glazed‑over Christian philosophy and words of secular thought, rather

than the word of the living God. Now it has challenged me in my own

ministry to understand what this tremendous deposit is that I am

responsible to dispense to others.

And if you turn to the 2nd chapter of 1 Corinthians, you will find

that the apostle Paul has put this in very striking terms. Here he is

defining again his own experience when he came to Corinth in the

opening words: "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come

proclaiming to you the testimony of God," or as some versions have it

the "mystery of God." Marturion is "testimony," musterion is

"mystery," They are very close together and some texts have one, and

some the other. And if it is "the mystery of God" which he originally

wrote, then it is right in line with what we have just seen in the

fourth chapter. He says, "This is how I want you to think of me: I am

a steward of the mysteries of God." Then he describes how he felt when

he came to Corinth. He wasn't full of a sense of power. He felt weak

and trembling, and his speech and his message were not in high flown

rhetoric or beautiful phrasing, but they were in the demonstration of

the Spirit and of power. Then beginning in verse 6 ‑‑ if any of you

have a New Testament, I would invite you to turn with me to this ‑‑ he

begins to describe what is the content and nature of this amazing

stewardship with which we have been entrusted. Yet among the mature,

he says, we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age,

or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. You know

throughout this first chapter the apostle has been contrasting what he

calls the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. The world by

wisdom ‑‑ that is its own wisdom ‑‑ does not know God. And he sets

these in sharp contrast.

I think it is very important for us as ministers and teachers of the

word of truth, to understand that the Bible nowhere ever puts down

human knowledge. We are not against the accumulation of knowledge. I

preach under the shadow of one of the great universities of our day,

Stanford University. And as I go over there I am impressed by the

tremendous knowledge that has been gathered together in that great

university ‑‑ tremendous libraries, great research laboratories, the

largest atom smasher in the world, two miles long, the linear

accelerator, running back into the hills back of Stanford, a great law

school, business school, and so on ‑‑ a vast accumulation of human

knowledge. It is always wrong for Christians to put down that in its

importance, or in its contribution to human life. It is wrong to do

so. The Bible everywhere encourages us to search out the mysteries of

God around us in the universe, to explore the design of God, and to

seek to find the answers ‑‑ and that's all that human knowledge does.

But what the Bible stands against is human wisdom. Now wisdom is the

use of knowledge. Now see that's where the secular world goes astray.

It takes all the wonderful knowledge that has been accumulated in most

impressive array and doesn't know what to do with it ‑‑ uses it in

abysmally wrong ways, and creates more problems than it cures. I have

here in my hand ‑‑ I don't have time to read it ‑‑ a listing I took

out of a secular magazine not long ago, in which the writer is

pointing out nine inventions and discoveries of men, which when they

were first introduced into human life were received with great

enthusiasm and acclaim as solving many of the problems of our day, and

making life much easier, modern achievements of technology and so on.

Then in a parallel column he lists all the results of the use of these

in human society and documents down the list how these have in turn

become the basis for dehumanization, the creation of widespread

despair among peoples, separating and polarizing groups from one

another, giving rise to disproportionate distribution of the economic

goods of earth, and creating far more problems than they ever solved.

That which was hailed as wonderful achievements of technology have now

been seen to be the cause of many of our problems.

Take the automobile, for instance. I can remember as a boy some of the

early automobiles ‑ I remember riding around in a Model T Ford ‑‑

that's the way I first went to high school. And it was regarded as a

tremendous achievement. Now the automobile gluts our streets, pollutes

our air, disturbs our calm. Every time we go out I'm convinced now

that God has designed the automobile as a test of an individual's

spirituality. And how many of us flunk it when we get behind the

wheel? And it has created tremendous problems in our day. Now that is

the wisdom of man versus the wisdom of God.

Now here is what the apostle says about that. He says first, the

wisdom of this age is doomed to pass away. In other words, it is only

temporary. It is impressive only for a while, and then it disappears..

While the wisdom which we're going to talk about ‑‑ which he goes on

to describe in very impressive terms ‑‑ which has been given to us to

dispense to others, is the wisdom that never passes away. Here he is

emphasizing the relevance of the word of God for our times. I hardly

have to detail for you what he means by the fact that human wisdom

passes away. I think the example I've just employed sets that out in a

most remarkable way. But listen to what he calls the wisdom of God. He

calls in verse 7 a secret and hidden wisdom. In verse 10 he calls it

the depths of God, the deep things of God. In verse 11 he calls it the

thoughts of God. A little red book that contains not the thoughts of

Mao, but the thoughts of God. In verse 12 it is the gifts bestowed on

us by God. In verse 13 it is spiritual truth. And in verse 16 a

startling word: it is the very mind of Christ.

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Now that is what we are called to dispense to our congregations. Not

our own opinions, but to reveal these hidden secrets which will never

be irrelevant. There are 3 good reasons for that. First, because God

always remains the same. The 139th Psalm is a wonderful exposition to

establish that for us. God never changes, he never varies in any way,

from age to age he remains the same. Second, man never changes. This

is one of the most remarkable things that we need to recall today ‑‑

that all of our technology has made no difference in the men and women

who employ them. They are still the same people they were hundreds of

years ago, thousands of years ago. And you can read literature to see

that people in the days of ancient Greece three or four hundred years

before Christ were struggling with the same basic problems we face

today: excessive taxation, the intrusion of government into the

affairs of the individual, international warfare and conflict,

widespread famines because of poor distribution of goods, racial

tensions rising on every hand: same problems. Where is the progress

that we want so? You see, man never changes ‑‑ that's why the gospel

is always relevant. And third, the word of God never changes. Not only

God himself but the revelation he gives of himself never changes.

That's why a congress such as this is of such great importance.

I had this highlighted for me by a story someone told me about going

to see an old friend of his who was a retired music teacher. And when

he knocked on the door, he greeted this friend with a rather flippant,

modern saying: he said, "Well, what's the good news today?" The old

man didn't say a word. He just walked across the room, picked up a

rubber hammer, and struck a gong there. And the note A sounded out

through the room. The old man said, "That is A. That was A a thousand

years ago. It will be A a thousand years from now. The tenor across

the hall flats on his high notes. The lady who plays the piano next

door strikes disharmonies. And the man who lives downstairs tries to

sing in the bathroom and can't carry a tune. But" ‑‑ and he hit the

gong again ‑‑ "that is A, and that is the good news for today."

Now that is what the New Testament is saying. God never changes. We

are declaring something that is always up to date, because it is

dealing with humanity as it always is ‑‑ and we ought to understand

that. Second, says the apostle, the nature and purpose, in what I

regard as one of the most amazing verses in all the New Testament, is

right here. "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which

God decreed before the ages" ‑‑ now listen to this ‑‑ "for our

glorification." I grew up in the Presbyterian church and on the

Westminster Covenant. I was taught very early the aim of man, the

reason for man's existence, is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.

The purpose of man is to live for the glory of God. But this passage

declares that God lives for the glory of man. Isn't that amazing? "For

our glorification." Now eventually of course that is what glorifies

God.

And here we have to think very briefly about what glory is. I've

discovered that glory, true glory as the New Testament uses it, is a

manifestation outwardly of the inward possibilities of a thing or

person. The hidden virtues brought out into openness. We look at the

sun and say that it is a glorious body: why? Because it's taking that

with which it is made and manifesting it in brilliant light. That

makes for glory. And when a person does that, when that which is

hidden inside, all his abilities and possibilities become demonstrated

in activity, we say he has done something glorious, he has achieved a

glory. Now this is what God has in mind. And what this is saying,

brothers and sisters, is that the message that we are to declare from

our pulpits is designed to complete our humanity, to bring it to

wholeness. I love that word ‑‑ it's a much better word than the word

translated in our New Testament "holiness" ‑‑ they come from the same

root. Holiness, Wholeness. And what God is after is a whole person:

balanced, capable, able to cope with life, well‑adjusted, not subject

to panic. That is what he is talking about. And the business of

preaching is to produce that kind of people in a congregation. And it

has the possibility of doing that very thing. Here we have this

stressed so strongly.

Now what I am seeking to convey to you is what I regard as the supreme

and paramount value of preaching. There is nothing like it. The

preacher or teacher has no rivals, either in the scientific

laboratory, on the psychiatrist's couch, or in the philosopher's

study. That's why Paul goes on to say in an expression of the

uniqueness of this, none of the rulers of this age understood this. If

they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. That is

amazing. When he says "the rulers of this age" he means more than just

Pilate, and Caesar, the governmental leaders. He means the leaders of

thought, the mindbenders, the shapers of public opinion, the

philosophers, the teachers of any generation. You won't find this kind

of truth, he says, in any secular body of knowledge. And that is a

great encouragement to me as a preacher.

I know that when I stand up on a Sunday morning in Palo Alto under the

shadow of Stanford University, and I open the book of God, and speak

to my congregation, in which are found not only a whole lot of what

many would call plain vanilla Christians ‑‑ I don't think there are

any such things ‑‑ but there are also many that the world highly

regards: physicists, scientists, philosophers, psychiatrists, doctors

and lawyers, and captains of industry and so on; and I know that when

I open the book of God and preach to them, I am giving them essential

knowledge that they do not have from any secular source or any secular

writer. I am giving them basic facts about life and about human nature

which they never learned in their secular college or graduate school.

I am giving to them understanding about themselves which is not

available from any other source ‑‑ so that they can fulfill their

humanity and be whole persons in a broken, fallen world. Now that's

the glory of preaching. And it is something we ought never to forget.

It is the business of the preacher to change the total viewpoint about

life of every member of his congregation, and to challenge the secular

illusions of our day, and strip them of their deceitfulness, and show

people how human wisdom fails, though human knowledge is quite

acceptable, and point out to them what that failure is doing to them

if they follow it. The instrument is the exposition and proclamation

of these mysteries of God.

Now in the remaining time I want to look with you briefly, but more

particularly, at some of these mysteries Paul says are our deposit,

entrusted to us, with a responsibility to give it out to our

congregation. How many of you have ever gone through the New Testament

and the Old and preached on the mysteries of God, the specific areas

on which these mysteries are detailed for us? Now they are not merely

subjects of interest in the Bible ‑‑ they are themes that run

throughout the whole Bible from beginning to end. They appear under

various terms ‑‑ and it would be a mistake to limit yourself only to

those places where the word "mystery" appears. For instance, take the

most frequently mentioned mystery in the Bible: it is called the

mystery of the kingdom of God. It appears also for instance in Paul's

11th chapter of the letter to the Romans, where he speaks of the

mystery of the blindness of Israel. This is part of the mystery of the

kingdom of God. Or the mystery of Babylon the Great in the book of

Revelation; that is part of the mystery of the kingdom of God. What do

we mean by that? Well, the kingdom of God, of course, is God's control

of history. It is the business of the preacher to help the

congregation to understand that the events that they read about in

their daily newspaper is an accounting from a secular point of view of

what God is doing, and to explain from the Bible what He is doing, and

what he hopes to achieve in these affairs. That's preaching the

mystery of the kingdom of God. It is not just a spiritual matter which

they enter into only by faith in Christ ‑‑ that's part of it, and that

ought to be very much a part of our preaching. But we must help them

to see that God is charge of daily life. And the events they read

about in their papers are simply accountings of how God goes about

what He is doing.

How many of you in the days of the Vietnamese war preached on what God

was doing in Vietnam? That's a proper subject ‑‑ to take from a

passage of Scripture to show how God uses war to judge all the nations

involved in it. What I heard during that period of time ‑‑ if it was

mentioned at all in evangelical pulpits, it was to chose sides and

join the polarization of American society which almost destroyed us

during that period, and take either the side of the hawks or the

doves, and say one of these is right and the other is wrong. Now the

Bible's approach is never that way. If we're preaching biblically and

thinking Christianly, we must deal with what the Old Testament and the

New Testament alike says what God uses war for in human history. There

is ample evidence in both testaments to deal with that in extended

ways, to open the eyes of people to see that God can close a nation

down, shut it down, to accomplish a purpose that can never be

accomplished by leaving it open to the gospel.

I remember in the 50's when the missionaries were kicked out of China,

everybody was heartbroken. We all were beating our breasts and

wringing our hands and saying, "Oh, what a terrible thing has happened

in China! God has allowed the communists to kick the missionaries out,

and the gospel is excluded. China is closed." Now 30 years later we

know that wasn't true. And the amazing thing is that we go back into

China and discover that the church has increased ‑‑ has increased

sevenfold during those thirty years. How many of us preached that as a

possibility in the days when the missionaries were kicked out of

China? It is because we don't understand the secret wisdom of God, and

how God works. That's why I find the church so weak today, because

we're not teaching it biblically. We're not opening the Scriptures and

letting them speak to help us understand the events of our own day.

Take another mystery: the mystery of lawlessness. This is the mystery

of the perpetuation of evil. Everybody in your congregation ‑‑

including the young people, especially the young people ‑‑ are asking

every day, at least in the secret of their own hearts, why is this

world such a mess? I watched Phil Donahue interview a couple of punk

rockers the other day. They were dressed very bizarrely. They had on

strange clothes. They were wearing make‑up that made their face look

like it was dead. They had black lipstick on ‑‑ the boy and the girl

wore black lipstick. And they had this strange, bizarre dress. And

Phil Donahue was asking, "Why do you do this? Why do you live like

this? Why do you dress like this? Why in your gathering together do

you often resort to violence and even shed blood deliberately? You

even puncture your own skin. Why do you do this?" These were ordinary

kids. It was obvious from listening to them that they were like

everybody else's kids. But what emerged from that was the revelation

that they believed that life was not worth living, that there was no

use going on. And they sunk into these bizarre reactions to express a

hopelessness about their day and age.

Now you see it is the business of Christians to explain why the world

seems hopeless, why evil perpetuates itself over and over, and seems

to be triumphant all the time. And there's no doing that apart from

the revelation of Scripture that we are up against the mystery of

lawlessness. That panoply of evil beings headed by the devil who as

Paul describes them are called the rulers of the darkness of this

world ‑‑ spiritual wickedness in high places ‑‑ who are master

manipulators, and who have access to the inner thoughts of mankind, to

guide them in ways of which they are totally unconscious, but which

make men do what the devil wants ‑‑ to mangle and twist and destroy

and obliterate all God's goodness among mankind. Now if we're not

preaching that, we're not explaining life to the people of our

congregation.

And more than that we need to explain the tactics of the devil, how he

seeks to bring about discouragement, and despair, hostility, and fear,

and the manifestations of these in our day. We don't live in a

different world from the New Testament world; the first century and

the twentieth century worlds are very much alike. And if we believe

that, we can help our people detect the same struggles and problems

and intrusions into human life that was visible and present in the

first century as well. We need to understand this. Psychiatrists can't

help here; psychologists can't. Only the Bible gives that answer.

Let me share with you a quotation I ran across some time ago, by Carl

Jung, the great noted Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist. He says,

"We stand perplexed and stupefied before the phenomenon of Nazism and

Bolshevism because we know nothing about man." Isn't that an amazing

statement from a leading psychologist of our day? We know nothing

about man. "Or, at any rate," he said, "have only a lopsided and

distorted picture of him. If we had self‑knowledge that would not be

the case. But we stand face to face with the terrible question of evil

and do not even know what is before us let alone know what to pit

against it." And even if we did know we still could not understand how

it could happen here.

You watch the newspapers and the magazines ‑‑ Time magazine and others

‑‑ I was so glad Jim Boice is reading Time magazine ‑‑ every now and

then tremendous admissions on the part of secular leaders of their

almost complete ignorance about world affairs ‑‑ that they don't know

the answers. Listen to this: When U Thant, the Burmese statesman, was

secretary‑general of the United Nations, before a distinguished panel

of some 60 world leaders, and before an audience of some 500 people

gathered in the United Nations to explore the ways to international

peace, he said these amazing words: "What element is lacking so that

with all our skill and with all our knowledge we still find ourselves

in the dark valley of discord and enmity? What is it that inhibits us

from going forward together to enjoy the fruits of human endeavor and

to reap the harvest of human experience? Why is it that for all our

professed ideals, our hopes, and our skills, peace on earth is still a

distant objective, seen only dimly through the storms and turmoils of

our present day?" What a poignant cry from an honest heart, crying

out, "What is missing? Why can't we make progress? Why is every

generation doomed to deal with the same problems over and over again?"

And I want to say to you that is only the preacher of the word of God

that can answer those questions. He has the answer. This is why Paul

concludes the paragraph by saying, "He that is spiritual judges all

things." And he has even as he said the mind of Christ. Now that isn't

just any Christian, that's those who understand the word of God ‑‑ who

deal with it, and work with it, and think it through, and come to

begin to reflect God's thoughts after him. They can deliver that.

Take the answer to the mystery of lawlessness‑‑ probably the greatest

secret revealed in the Scriptures ‑‑ what Paul calls in 1 Timothy "the

mystery of godliness." That remarkable revelation which is the secret

of vitality in the Christian life, which Paul says in his briefest

description in Collosians, is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." In

you, dwelling there, imparting to you his own life, his own power, in

righteousness. And it's the business of preachers to help people

understand that they are to confront their daily struggles in the

light of that revelation. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

There's the mystery of the church ‑‑ God's new society, what God is

doing in the world today, how the facades and scaffolding of the old

creation are breaking down and tumbling all around us. And in the very

midst of it, unseen by the world, is rising a new structure which is a

holy temple for the dwelling place of God and the Spirit, which one

day the curtain will be opened and the world will see, standing in its

midst, absolutely mindboggling in its glory. That's what we're

involved in. This is the business of preaching. It is what we call in

our congregation the big burner concept‑‑ that fire underneath

everything else that keeps people's minds aflame, and young people's

hearts challenged and eager to grasp life with these concepts as

weapons to handle what's coming. If you want to turn on the young

people in your congregation you begin to set forth in vivid language

the mysteries of God, and you'll see them come to life.

I sat at a dinner table not long ago and we got to talking about some

of these things. There were present around the table a number of young

people in their teens and early twenties, as well as several older

people in their fifties and sixties. And as we discussed some of these

things I observed the reactions of the people around the table. And

you know what I saw? Those who were over 50 were obviously bored by

what we were talking about. Those who were under were stirred and

alive and their eyes were shining, and they couldn't wait ‑‑ they

couldn't get enough of what we were talking about. Because the older

people were hearing it in terms of familiar words that they had never

thought through in terms of the context, while the younger ones were

grasping the exciting ideas behind them, and capturing the glory of

the secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God has designed for human

glorification ‑‑ to make us whole beings, which every young person

longs for.

Then there is the mystery of resurrection ‑‑ that most remarkable

power that is quietly at work in every congregation, which has power

to raise things from the dead. That's its most remarkable attribute.

When everything is dull and dead and listless, and apathy has set in,

it's like a cemetery ‑‑ that's where resurrection power works best.

They took a survey at Stanford University not long ago ‑‑ they

discovered that 90% of the student body is neither for nor against

apathy. That's what happened to our campuses. All the violence, all

the commitment, all the fiery‑eyed zeal that was there 20 years ago or

10 years ago has faded. They've settled back into the old ruts again.

But resurrection power takes no note of either of those qualities. It

doesn't need anything to make it effective. This is what the New

Testament tells us over and over again is the power committed to the

people of God. "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly

beyond all that we can ask or think, according" ‑‑ to what? ‑‑

"according to the power that is at work within us." Paul says, "In him

we proclaim warning and teaching with all wisdom that I might present

every person mature in Christ" ‑‑ grown‑up, able to handle life ‑‑

"for this I toil with all the energy which he mightily inspires within

me."

Now how many Christian congregation know this? How many are given

access to these vital truths, and compelling words backed with the

passion and power of a convinced heart to go out and begin to be

different kinds of people in the ordinary affairs of life? That's the

business of preaching ‑‑ that we might be stewards of these mysteries

of God, faithfully dispensing them to our congregations that we might

like Paul have a burning fire to declare the whole counsel of God, and

not to leave this earth until we have fully stated before the ears of

all who will hear the amazing secret and hidden wisdom of God which

God decreed before the ages for our glorification. I tell you when you

faithfully preach as a steward of the mysteries of God you will find

your people alive, excited; you will find your place packed out all

the time, because this is the most compelling truth in the world, it

explains humanity, it explains as much as we can understand of the

majesty and mercy and might of our God. It begins to set things in

perspective so people can have guidelines to life ‑‑ and to know what

are the absolutes, and what are not. That's what we're called to,

brethren ‑‑ "This is how we would have men regard us ‑‑ as stewards of

the mysteries of God."

Now tomorrow I want to start there and work through with you as much

as possible how do you get ready to do this. How do you find this kind

of truth in the Bible, and how do you go about proclaiming it. You

understand that in an hour's time we can do no more than survey the

subject. But I want it to be very practical, and I want to use the

overhead projector so you'll have some help in this.

Can we close with just a word of prayer?

Thank you, our Father, for calling us back again to a look at an

amazing calling that has been given to us. You have placed us, Lord,

right where you want us to be, among the people you want us to labor

with, amidst the problems that you want us to be engaged with. Now

grant to us now, Lord, a new conviction of the glory of our calling, a

new sense of the possibilities and potentials that lie in the

preaching ministry. And may we be found, Lord, as faithful stewards of

the mysteries of God. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Listen to this talk in RealAudio (from the PBC Web site).

(return to Expository Preaching and Worship Resources page)

\webpage{http://www.expository.org/expository1.htm

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Stedman 03

Powerful Expository Preaching, Part 2

The Preparation of Expository Sermons

By Ray Stedman, Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, CA. Delivered at

the first Congress on the Bible, San Diego, 1982

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Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight

thereof, not for filthy lucre, and so on, but remembering that you are

responsible to the chief shepherd. Just in line with that matter of

visitation, you might enjoy the story that I heard recently of a

pastor who was out visiting in his parish. He knocked on a certain

door, and no one answered but he could hear people in the house. He

knocked again and still no one answered. So finally in somewhat

disgust he left his card. And he wrote on it - Revelation

3:20 - Revelation 3:20} "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if

anyone will open the door, I will come in." And he left. He didn't

think any more about it until the next Sunday morning when he was

preaching and he was standing at the door after the service, a lady

came by. And without a word just handed him a piece of paper and

ducked out the door. And he opened the paper and read,

" - Genesis 3:10 - Genesis 3:10}: I heard your voice, but I was

in the garden. And I hid myself because I was naked." Which says

something about the variety of experiences that a preacher can have in

his work as a visitor.

But we're trying to zero in these mornings on the work of preaching.

Expository preaching. I believe with John R.W. Stott, whom many of you

have heard, I am sure, one of the outstanding contemporary expositors,

when he says that the only preaching worthy of the name is expository

preaching. Now there are other forms. Dr Shaffer this morning was not

preaching. I'm sure you'll recognize that. He was giving us a lecture,

a verbal essay, on a subject, and a very helpful lecture it was, a

very important subject, but that's not preaching, not expository

preaching. Blaine Adams on the other hand I felt did give us a good

example of exposition. He took the text and let it speak to us. Though

it was a brief text it was a very cogent and a very important message

that it gave. So exposition is allowing the text to speak to the

people through the servant of Christ.

I want to say one additional word on that: Expository preaching, in my

judgment, is not what is often called a verse by verse commentary. I

know preachers who get up and ramble away at a passage of Scripture,

giving thoughts off the top of their head usually as to what it means.

And that type of approach almost inevitably deals only with the

obvious. Anybody reading the text could say those things. And perhaps

even supply much of the illustrations that might be used, because we

all have similar experiences. But that's not expository preaching,

even though it is based on a passage of Scripture. Expository

preaching deals with the structure of the text. It wrestles with the

text to the point that you can understand thoroughly what it is

saying. And then reproduces it in language understandable by your

hearers. That's the work of a preacher.

It's what Jesus meant when he said, "The good steward takes from his

treasury things new and old." The old things are the eternal,

unchangeable principles of that secret and hidden wisdom of God, which

God ordained before the ages for our glorification. That's the text of

Scripture, the truths of the gospel, the exciting revelation of the

lost secrets of our humanity. I tried yesterday morning to set that

before us so that we might grasp again the glory of preaching, and the

uniqueness of it, that we're doing what no other spokesman on earth

can do in helping people to understand both the nature of their

humanity and the nature of the God they must deal with. Thought that

is what we are called to do, you see, it isn't achieved by just a

rambling commentary. We must understand these things. I've always

benefited by the word of the Old Testament that says it is the glory

of God to conceal a thing, but the glory of kings is to search it out.

Now that's the business of the expositor: he searches out the deep

meanings of the text.

John Stott, who is a dear personal friend, and he and I are working

together to advance the cause of expository preaching around the world

at this moment, has said there are four marks, in his judgment, of

expository preaching. Before we get into the method of preparing, let

me give you these. First, he says, expository preaching is thoughtful

preaching. Thoughtful preaching. It is the first mark of expository

preaching. And that means that the preacher takes the biblical text

seriously. He sees it indeed as a word from God, and as Paul describes

it, the deep things of God. Therefore he can't give just cursory

attention to it. The truths, the deep things of Scripture, do not lie

on the surface where anybody can pick them up. They lie beneath the

ground, in a sense, where one must exercise penetrative analysis, dig

deeply before they reveal themselves. So the first mark: thoughtful

preaching takes the biblical text seriously.

And with it, takes the contemporary world seriously. Now that I think

is what Dr Shaffer was saying this morning. The business of the

preacher is to judge the culture of our day. This is where people

wrestle. They come affected in one way or another by the cultural

struggles that are going on today, by the clash of principles, by the

uncertain voices that speak, and by the fantasies and illusions which

the world pursues with avid conviction that they are truth. The

business of the preacher is to expose that as false, to strip these

ideas of their illusive character, and to show the corresponding

reality that the word of God reveals. And therefore we must know the

culture around us, we must be familiar with what is being taught, what

is being said, we must read instruments that reveal to us how people

are thinking, We must read some of the think magazines, perhaps, of

our day, and listen to television, watch a movie now and then that

speaks to the culture, so that we can take the contemporary world

seriously and the biblical word seriously. That's thoughtful

preaching.

The second mark, Stott says, of expository preaching is courage,

courage. That is, to take the uncomfortable words of Scripture as well

as the comfortable ones. To speak to the difficult issues as well as

the ones that encourage and enlighten us. This is, I think, one of the

chief values of exposition. When you take a whole passage, a whole

book of the Bible or a major section of it, and you're preaching from

that, you can't leave anything out. You have to cover it all. And when

you do come to the uncomfortable words, words of judgment, words of

conviction, words that contravene some of the popular issues of the

day, that deal with divorce, abortion, or whatever, your hearers can't

accuse you of choosing a text just because it is a pet project of

yours. They see that it is something the Scripture has handled. That's

one of the great values of expository preaching. We must remember the

words of Jesus, Stott says: "Woe unto you when all men speak well of

you." It is necessary at times to offend people, though we must do it

lovingly.

Then the third mark of expository preaching according to John Stott,

is sincerity, earnestness. That is, the preacher himself must fully

believe what he is saying, he must feel passion in the delivery of it.

He does not speak merely to titillate the senses of his hearers; he

isn't trying just to light their fires a bit, or give them a good

feeling. But he himself is declaring what he feels in the marrow of

his bones. I love what Spurgeon said: He prays that his very blood

might be bibline. That is, the Bible so saturate his thought that it

actually flavors and colors his blood. That's the feeling the preacher

must have when he is speaking out of deep conviction.

The fourth mark is that of humility. Blaine Adams gave us such a

beautiful word on that this morning, such a helpful word from

Scripture. I often say that text over to myself before I preach: "He

that thinks he understands something knoweth nothing as he ought to

know it." Pride, Stott says, is the chief occupational hazard of the

preacher. When we get proud and arrogant and begin to think of

ourselves as specially gifted , specially proficient, we are

destroying the power of God through us. Pride is the chief

occupational hazard of the preacher. We need the humility to submit to

Scripture, the humility to let God speak and not us, and the humility

to let the Holy Spirit act and not our natural gifts. And so Stott

sets before us these four marks as characteristic of expository

preaching.

Now how does one do it? This is the question that I find men are

asking everywhere around the world. Our staff and I were out in

Australia last year about this time. We preached all over that

sub‑continent, all the major centers there. And everywhere we found

men who wanted to do expository preaching, but confessed that they

didn't know how. They had not been taught this in their seminaries, or

they had been given models to follow of thematic preaching, or of

topical preaching, and they had no knowledge of how to go about

letting the text deeply speak to the contemporary culture in which

they were living. And that's what I hope to present to you this

morning hour.

I would like to give you first an outline of the steps ‑‑ there are

nine steps that I personally have learned to follow in this regard.

And I don't apologize for using my own method because that's all I

know really. But I recognize there may be variations of this in other

men. Each man works out his own approach. I also confess to you that I

found it very difficult to see what these steps were. In my earlier

ministry I found that I kind of unconsciously sensed what I needed to

do to take the text apart. But in doing it I couldn't watch myself. So

that if I was intent on doing it I didn't know what I had done. And if

I tried to watch myself, I couldn't do it. So it took a long, painful

time, until I finally watched enough to catch a few glimpses here and

there, to put this down on paper. So there's considerable sweat and

strain behind this.

The first thing I do is to choose a major passage of Scripture. That

is, I make a judgment about what part of the Bible I want to expound

for the next few weeks or months to my people. Now at Palo Alto I'm

preaching through the second letter of Paul to Timothy. I finished 1

Timothy last fall, and now I'm beginning 2 Timothy with them. And I'm

going right through second Timothy, taking everything in it, in order

to set forth the truth of that epistle. I try to alternate in my own

preaching between the New Testament and the Old Testament. And I find

that Old Testament preaching is both fascinating and helpful to people

and one that they find little exposure to elsewhere. The Old Testament

is the unknown section of the Bible. And that is much to our loss. The

Old Testament is a rich book, a marvelous book. So I alternate between

the Old Testament and then the New Testament.

I take into consideration the struggles people are going through. I

preached through 1 and 2 Corinthians a year or so ago simply because

everybody was struggling at that time with some of the issues that are

treated there: sexual matters, how to handle single life, there is a

great section there on that, how to handle conflict and division

within the church. And all these issues are so evident in that series

of letters that I chose that. So choose a major section to preach on.

Then, create from that major section a general outline. I think this

is very, very important. I couldn't preach without this, my

guidelines. It represents the fruits of reading the passage. I get the

general breakdown of the thoughts of the writer. A get a bird's eye

view of what the whole book is about. And that gives me a sense of

security when I deal with the text. I know that if I see where

everything is going I'm more apt to treat it accurately in its

individual divisions. Heresy, as you probably know, is truth out of

balance. That's all it is. Most heresies start with a very sizable

nugget of truth. But they become heresies when they are pushed beyond

the balance which Scripture so beautifully maintains. This is why the

word of God does not follow the format of human books. When you read

one of my books or somebody else's books, you'll find a chapter on

this subject and another on that subject. But in the Scriptures God

himself tells us through Isaiah the prophet it is here a little, there

a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, so that truth is

always balanced with other truth. And that is one of the major

defenses against the intrusion of error into your preaching. Therefore

it is important to understand where the passage is going in general.

Now to assist us in this I have brought along a sample of a major

outline I prepared on the book of Collossians. You see it covers the

entire book. I call this the condensed outline. I get this by reading,

and as I read I just jot down. This is the introduction, this is the

prayer of the apostle. That's a kind of introductory passage which

covers the first 14 verses of the letter. Then I see the apostle moves

directly into his subject, which is the power of God. It seems to me

that the key verse of the letter to the Collossians is found in these

words, where the apostle says in his prayer, "May you be strengthened

with all power according to his glorious might." Now that is

thrilling, isn't it, the power of God, the might of God, released in

human life. But we can't stop reading there, for the apostle goes on

to say what you use this power for. For all endurance and patience

with joy. we think of power as something that you use to go out and do

dazzling miracles with. But you need the power of God to be patient,

to hang in there, to endure, and to be joyful as you do it. That's the

key to the whole letter. Christ is the mighty power of God, and I saw

that, and saw how he deals with the Lord as the firstborn of creation

and the firstborn of the dead, and that strange mystery of God: Christ

in you the hope of glory. Now that's my second major division, because

it's the second change of thought of the apostle. This helps me to

understand what the book is about.

(audience question, not audible)

I think it helps to find key verses, but I often don't find them until

I've gone through something like this, and understand what the book is

about. Then I often find ‑‑ especially in the writings of Paul ‑‑ that

it's all summarized for me in one single phrase. And that was the case

here.

\webpage{http://www.expository.org/expository2.htm

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Then he changes the subject in chapter 2 verse 8 to false approaches,

philosophy and empty deceit, and the specific manifestations of false

power: rituals, and worship of angels, and legalism and so on. You

see, I'm just making headings, I'm not trying to get the whole passage

in detail. I'm simply trying to get a bird's eye view of the whole

book. And then he comes to the true processes of power, chapter 3. And

tells us to deal with realities: that is ‑‑ remember the passage? ‑‑

set your affections on things above, not on the things of the earth.

Now above doesn't mean off in space somewhere, it means in the

invisible world of the spirit. That's what your to think about and

deal with, so that your life is governed by realistic principles. And

that's what he deals with, deal with realities. And then he says,

"Practice what you believe. Put this to work in your life. And apply

it universally. Fathers and children, wives and husbands, children and

parents, servants and masters. Apply all this truth." And finally he

has some closing instructions and concerns. Now that's all I'm after

at this point. Just a bird's eye view of the passage.

Let me give you another example of this. Here for instance is a

condensed outline of the letter to the Corinthians. Let me just give

you the headings. Again, after some work with the letter, I found that

the key verse of Corinthians is the ninth verse of the first chapter,

where the apostle says, "God is faithful, who has called you into the

fellowship of his son, Jesus, our Lord." Fellowship with Christ,

personal walk, daily practicing the presence of Christ. That's the

key. And then the passage breaks down very fitly into, first, the

carnalities, and the apostle lists them. And the business of the

preacher is to classify them according to the way they appear. There's

pride, and its consequences. And he deals with that very plainly.

There's divisions, boastings, jealousy and strife, and complacency.

All those are manifestations of pride. Then the second division, lust

and its problems. And there you have the shameful immorality that is

mentioned in the fifth chapter, taking of one another to law, the lust

for revenge, the unlawful, inappropriate litigation, and then the

prostitution of the body as some of them were actually dealing with

prostitution. And then the third division, life and its dangers. Here

it's just a matter of listing the subjects: about marriage, about

single life, about our influences on others, about personal rights,

about self‑discipline, about idolatry, and about how to handle

tradition: the two traditions f the church, baptism and the Lord's

supper. And then the apostle himself gives us the second major

division. He says, "And now concerning the spiritualities." Not

"spiritual gifts" as we have it in our King James Version, it's not

spiritual gifts, it's not the word "charismata," it's the word

"pneumatikoi," the things concerning the spirit. And in this he deals

with, first, God, the goal of the Spirit, which is, how to identify

the mark of error and the mark of the Spirit himself, unity. And then

the gifts of the Spirit, and then the fruit of the Spirit, love, and

then the relationship between the fruit and the gifts taken up in

chapter 14. And finally the resurrection of the body ‑ the

spiritualities. And then a concluding chapter, 16, on the

practicalities. Now I've got the epistle, you see, really in my mind,

under just three major headings: the carnalities, the spiritualities,

and the practicalities. And that's all I've been looking for as I read

through this letter, what are these major divisions. They'll be my

guidelines.

Here's another one of a similar nature on 2nd Corinthians. There is

the condensed outline of 2nd Corinthians. It's very similar. It's a

little harder to catch some of this, but this is where practice comes

in. If you read this, and think through the letter you come to these

divisions. First, the practice of the ministry, covered in chapters

one and two, then the principles of ministry ‑‑ this is that great

section, marvelous section, autobiographical section of Paul. The

triumph out of pressures, the new covenant in other words, the

opposition that comes from within, the flesh; the opposition from

without, the devil. There's a great passage there in chapter four. The

present experience of struggling with these. And finally the glorious

future in chapter five. Remember those great words there about "when

this earthly tabernacle is dissolved we have a house not made by hands

eternal in the heavens." And then the great word on the reconciling

ministry. Then he changes the subject. He talks about repentance, its

pain and its joy. And then again in chapter 8 and 9 you get the

subject of giving. Very helpful passage. Example of true giving,

principles of true giving, and the possibilities of true giving are

given there. And this is what I saw just working with a pencil in hand

reading through this book several times. And finally, handling the

devil's infiltraters. What do you do with errors, heresies, and those

that propound them right in the midst of the congregation. That was

Paul's problem in 2nd Corinthians. And he gives us most helpful

guidelines on that. The weapons we must employ, the credentials we

must have to do this work, the tactics we may use in this struggle,

and the true apostleship which he represented, and then some final

words on that.

Now the detailed outline takes this condensed outline and begins to

fill it out, to flesh it out, when I get ready to preach. I'll get

back to that in a little bit. All right, now let's go back to our

guideline on how you work these things out. We've got "Create a

general outline." Now once I have that then I'm ready to prepare to

actually preach on the passage. There I start then working out what

I'm going to preach the very first Sunday I take this. And I choose a

manageable preaching section. That is based upon how much time I have,

how deep I want to penetrate the passage, what is the level of

understanding of the congregation ‑‑ are they beginners, do they need

to be taught simple truth, not complicated, ABC's from this, are they

able to handle the meat of the word as well as the milk of it? I need

to answer these questions. Naturally if I'm preaching in my own

congregation I'm pretty much aware of all that. And it helps me choose

a manageable section. Now I would say that many of the modern versions

today help us greatly by paragraphing the Scriptures. Whoever inserted

the verses in the Bible I think was under the influence of demonic

spirits at the time because he seems to put them at the very worse

places, and sometimes cuts off the conclusion of a paragraph by making

a chapter division immediately before it. And you have to ignore all

those chapter division. But the editors of modern texts have helped us

greatly by giving us a paragraph approach to that.

Then my next step is to check out in that passage that I'm going to

preach on the first morning the theological and the linguistic

problems that I find there. I find this very important. I don't bring

all this into the pulpit with me. I probably will not even mention

some of these problems. I may mention one or two if its pertinent to

the text and if it's a problem among the people. But I want to know

what the answers are as far as I can determine them. So that if

anybody asks me about the text I have already wrestled with the issue.

And so when I'm in my study I spend a lot of time trying to do word

studies on the meaning of words, and check out some of the textual

difference to make a choice as to which textual rendering is the right

one, and work on some of the linguistic problems involved. Now some

texts don't require a lot of work in this area. You have to determine

that as you go along. But this is the order that I follow.

And then the fifth step is to set it in a historical context. Now here

I am trying to be faithful to the culture of the first century, if I'm

dealing with the New Testament, or the Old Testament times. I want to

understand customs and attitudes and atmosphere of that first century

world. I want to put myself back into it. Here's where I find a

commentator like William Barclay very helpful. Barclay's theology

cannot always be trusted ‑‑ he was confused in certain areas,

especially on the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. But his

background material is magnificent. And he will give you a great deal

of help in putting yourself back into the situation that the writer

was. Now, if we're going to be faithful workman rightly dividing the

word of truth, we must do this. We must understand what the text meant

to the people who heard it. And how they applied it to their culture

and their life. And having done that, we mustn't leave it there. This

is where a lot of so‑called exegetes are content to do. They are busy

teaching the people what this text meant to the early Christians. Well

that's helpful, but that isn't really help enough. Our Bible is more

than good news for first century man ‑‑ it is also good news for 20th

century man. And we have to move on from that. Now this is where we do

that.

Now at this point I develop an exegetical outline of the preaching

section which I have chosen. And this is what I refer to as a detailed

outline. For instance, here is an example, again from 2 Corinthians,

of the introduction to that letter. I think that was the first message

I preached, only on the first two verses. The apostolic authority, the

ecclesiastical unity of the church, and the existential supply, grace,

mercy, and peace, from God the father. Now I just made a whole message

on that. You may not want to do that, you may want to just touch on

that briefly and take a larger section. And here's where a preacher

has a lot of choice, as to how much of the text he is going to handle,

and how much and what in it he is going to emphasize. If I'd wanted to

go on and just touch upon the outline, I would have taken the next

section for my text that first time, which would be under the heading

A: the practice of the ministry involves continual affliction and

comfort. And this is a great passage for those whose hearts are

hurting in your congregation. It falls under two major headings: the

source of afflictions, which are the mercies of God, and the comforts

that accompany them, and I just point that out. And then the second

heading is the reasons for affliction, and that's the major issue of

that passage. And I simply detail them. One, the first reason is to

experience comfort ourselves. Remember how it says? That the comfort

with which we have been comforted by God, we are to pass on to others,

so that they may be comforted with the comfort that God showed to us.

And therefore the first reason for experiencing affliction in our own

life is to experience the comfort of God ourselves. God always deals

with the preacher before he deals with the preaching.

And the second reason is to pass that on to others. And I found that

could be broken down as comfort balances affliction, afflictions often

are given because of others. Some of our afflictions like Job's didn't

come because of any problems so much in him as in others that he was

in touch with. And the fact that afflictions are no cause for being

upset at God. That's a very important point. That's what Joni Erickson

learned, didn't she? That God is not accountable to her. And then the

second thing under that is to shatter our self‑sufficiency. And Paul's

great experience in Asia he lists as doing that very thing. He says we

were so burdened, so crushed, so pressed down, that we felt we had

received the sentence of death. He was shattered by this horrible

experience he went through. And why? Well, in order that God's beyond

hope deliverance might be experienced. God who raises the dead, so

that no situation might be hopeless when God is involved. And then

finally to increase thanksgiving.

Now there's a wonderful study there, you see, on affliction. A whole

message devoted to it. But based on the text, bringing out what the

text has to say. I could illustrate that further but I must hasten on.

That's what I call an exegetical outline. Now you see in that passage

that I just showed you, I included every single thing in that text. I

left nothing out. Everything Paul said appeared in my outline as I saw

the logical structure of it that he had in his mind as he was working

on it.

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But now I don't take that exegetical outline into the pulpit to preach

from. At this point I shift from what is called hermeneutics,

interpretation, to now preparing to deliver it, which is called

homiletics. And I hope we've learned that homiletics is not simply a

matter of rhetoric, of developing certain little gimmicks which you

use to hold attention with. Homiletics is based upon primarily the

psychology of communication. It's trying to understand who's going to

listen to you, what state of mind they're going to be in, what the

conditions are under which you're preaching, and how can you make

appeal to them so as to captivate and hold their interest. You see

preaching is all too often dull and deadly, because we don't spend any

time thinking about its delivery. As soon as we get content, we want

to rush up there and unload the whole load on our congregation, and

all the process of our study. And nothing could be more deadly. That's

why preaching has been described as the art of talking in someone

else's sleep. A man said to me, "I always pray that my congregation

will either arise greatly strengthened or awake greatly refreshed."

One or the other. But preaching should be alive, it ought to be vital.

I learned a great deal on this from the apostle Paul, who said when

writing to the Colossians, he said his text for his whole ministry was

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, he said. And then

he gives us his method: Warning, and teaching every man in all wisdom.

Warning and teaching. When I first read that, I thought, "He's got

that reversed." You don't warn people before you teach them. You teach

first, and if they don't heed it, you warn them what the results will

be. And when I checked Paul's preaching I found that's what he did. So

I said to myself, Why does he put it in reverse? And here's where

settling linguistic problems will help you. When I checked the text

itself, in Greek, I found it didn't say that at all. "Warning" is an

editor's interpretation of the word the apostle used. The actual word

is "to put in mind, to capture the mind." And it isn't a warning in

our usual sense of that word. What it means is to alert, to grab hold

of people, to get their attention. And that properly precedes

preaching. When he was to speak to the citizens of Athens at the

invitation of the leaders of the city, remember how he started? A

beautiful way of getting attention. In effect, what he said was to put

it in what must have seemed to them the contemporary language of their

day, he said something like this. "You know, I've been walking around

your beautiful city ‑‑ every tourist who goes to Athens goes

sightseeing. And I've been sightseeing. And in the process of walking

around, I've noticed something about you people: you're very religious

people. You have a very deep interest in the things of God." You see

he's complimenting them. He's getting their attention. That's a good

way to start with people. "I noted that there were several shrines

around the city, all of them dedicated to the unknown God. Now that's

most remarkable. You people are interested in the things of God. And

you've told me by this that there are things you don't know about God.

And that's what I've come to talk to you about." See what an

introduction! He's got them right with him. He's awakened their

attention. And they gave him that attention right through to the end

until he got on to the controversial things. Then some quit, but a few

believed. But you see that's what I'm talking about here.

Now at this point you'll begin to do that. You'll first refer to

commentaries and expositions. Now here is where you check your work

against somebody else's. And that's very valuable. Charles Spurgeon

used to say, "I don't understand how a man who thinks so highly of

what the Holy Spirit said to him thinks so little of what he said to

anybody else." And it's very important to read what others have done.

Now there are commentaries and commentaries. Some of them aren't worth

the paper they're printed on. I don't think I own a single

multi‑volume commentary like Matthew Henry or some of those, done by

one man. Because I've found that one man cannot be expert enough in

all the areas that Scripture covers. I prefer volumes of commentaries

that are done by different men, all of whom are expert in the book

that they are working on. Or even individual expositions of a book of

the Bible. That's what I put in my library. Now some I find very

helpful. I'll read anything Martyn Lloyd‑Jones wrote on a passage; I

don't always agree with him, but I always have to have a good reason

why I don't. He forces me to think. I read John Stott on things. I got

great help as a young preacher from G. Campbell Morgan. He was a great

expositor, the prince of preachers. And he taught me how to expound

and handle Scripture, and how to deliver it in an interesting and

evocative way. So here's where you begin to get ready to deliver now.

And then I prepare a preaching outline. Now you notice I've got three

different outlines that I've worked on: the major outline that covers

the whole book that is my guideline to truth, which I'm free to change

as I work through the book more in detail. I may say, oh, I missed

that there, I think the break comes here, and perhaps he handles it a

slightly different ‑‑ no outline needs to be set in concrete when you

get it. Work it through. Then I develop an exegetical outline of each

preaching section, which is tied together so in the end I have a

complete detailed outline of the whole book. And then I come at last

to the preaching outline. Now here I think about how I'm going to

introduce this. I visualize the people. I think of standing up there

and what I'm going to say that's going to capture their attention and

introduce the subject in a way that means they're all with me right

from the start and I put that down. I write down a brief phrase or

something that calls that to mind. I don't write my messages out. I

find that too cumbersome to work with. But I do put down something

that will recall to my mind what I've thought through in detail.

And here I will put in all the illustrations of truth. Exegesis that

is simply laid upon people in a heavy theological fashion is hard to

handle. But illustrations lighten it and illuminate it and make it

alive and vital. And I try to think of illustrations from my own life,

from my experience, from the experience of others. I seldom use books

of illustrations. Once in a while one will stick in my mind or seem

appropriate but usually something out of my experience, or something

I've run into, or a quotation that somebody has said in a striking

way. I like to use little jingles now and then. One I often use when I

preach away from my place at the close of a series of messages is a

little doggerel that goes:

There was a young poet from Japan

Whose poetry no one could scan.

When told it was so

He said, Yes I know,

But I try to get as many words in the last line as I can.

And something like that sticks in people's mind. Adrian Rogers used a

little jingle like that and it stuck in people's mind. "Be sure you've

got the goods" ‑‑ remember that one ‑‑ the lion? And so on, and the

mouse that tried that. That stuck in people's mind, that illustrated

the point. And it takes as much work ‑‑ listen to me now ‑‑ it takes

as much work to do the homiletical preparation as it takes to do the

hermeneutical preparation. So when you get to the point where you've

got a good, solid, biblical, exegetical outline of a passage, you're

only halfway through. And unless you will do comparable work thinking

through how you are going to communicate this truth you're going to

find that all your labor in exegesis has virtually been lost because

it is not communicable. And that's why it is important to do that.

Now the last step I have is: I prepare my heart and my body. I usually

start working on the preaching section which I have chosen on Monday

morning. I work on it again Tuesday morning. I spend a little time on

it Wednesday and I then I have it down enough that I can think about

it as I ride around in the car, do other things, work in the yard, and

so on. And I'm meditating on that text all that time. Then on Friday I

set aside the whole morning and even part of the afternoon if I need

to, to do all the rest of the work necessary in preparation. Now for

one message here. Usually on Friday afternoon I have everything ready

except maybe my final preaching notes. On Saturday morning I may put

those together ‑‑ it may take me an hour or two to do that. And then I

set aside the passage entirely ‑‑ my notes and everything else. I do

something else with my family on Saturday, or busy myself with yard

work or whatever. And I never think of them again until Saturday

evening. Then I take them out and I go to bed early on Saturday night.

Now you can't preach two sessions as I do on Sunday morning ‑‑ an 8:15

service and an 11 o'clock service ‑‑ and stay up past 10:30 Saturday

night. You'll be weary and tired and so on. And I go to bed at least

by 10:30, possibly 10 o'clock Saturday night. So I can wake fully

refreshed and ready to go.

And also I prepare my heart. I pray over this truth. I've been praying

all along that God would open my eyes and teach me things. And I pray

on Saturday night over it. And on Sunday morning I usually sit down

again and read through my notes very quickly. And then spend 10

minutes or so just thanking God for what it means to me in my own

life, and what it will do in the lives of my hearers, and I pray for

them, and then I go down and deliver the message. And I find that is

very necessary: to come into the actual preaching moment with your

heart filled with a sense of the presence of the Lord, and your mind

gripped by the power of the message which you've discovered for

yourself out of the Scriptures. And the expectation of what this is

going to do when it's turned loose among the people.

Now that's my style of preaching. Now let me just in conclusion

suggest two fine books on preaching. Here is Martyn Lloyd‑Jones' book

on Preaching and Preachers. [click on the link to order through

Amazon]. He just died about last March ‑ but it's a great book and

very helpful and Martyn Lloyd‑Jones is an admirable expositor of

preaching. He goes at it perhaps in more depth than any of us would

want to. I think he took if I remember 14 years on the book of Romans,

and only got to - chapter 14 - Romans 14} in that time. So you

may not want to go that thoroughly.

Here's a new book by John Stott which I believe is not yet available

here in the States, so I have an English copy of it. It's called I

Believe in Preaching. [Now available in the US under the title Between

Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century. Click on

the link to order through Amazon.] But it will be available very

shortly. But it's a very helpful, practical book from an outstanding

expositor and preacher of our day. John R. W. Stott, I Believe In

Preaching, now published by Hodder and Stoughton in London.

Those are two excellent books on preaching. I would urge you also to

read preachers, read expositors. Get to know their temperament, their

approach, and it's very helpful to help you in your own.

Now perhaps we can take a few moments for questions.

[inaudible question] Yes, the question is do I preach more than one

sermon a week, and it seemed to this speaker that it's a little

difficult to find the time to prepare for more. At the present time,

yes, I preach only one sermon a week in my own church, delivered twice

on Sunday morning. But for years I preached on Sunday morning, Sunday

evening, and Wednesday night. And I prepared for it very much the same

way I do now. I would say again that finding the time to do this means

you have to really see preaching as your major work in your ministry.

Now that doesn't mean to cut out your family. Families come before

ministries. But it does mean that you have to see this as the major

thing you do. And you must take whatever time it takes to get this

done in a thorough way. Because this is what God is going to check you

up on when you get to glory. I'm going to talk about that tomorrow,

the accountability of the pastor.

[inaudible question] Where do I start on Monday in this 9 step

outline. Now you see before I begin a book at all I have already

chosen the major passage, I've created the general outline, I have

chosen a manageable section. I have to make announcements of what I'm

going to speak on a couple of weeks before so my staff knows, so I've

chosen all that by that time. So where I start on Monday is to check

out the theological and linguistical problems, and begin to chew up

the text, meditating on it and so on. I may yet still be working on my

exegetical outline. That's where I start, doing that.

[inaudible question] When have I done the first three? Well, sometime

in the process of getting ready for the text I also look ahead as to

what I might be preaching on next. I just squeeze that in in moments

when I can. But I'm looking down the line from time to time. I don't

try to determine a year in advance what I'm going to be preaching on,

but I certainly do want to know several months in advance what's going

to be the next book I'll be working on.

[inaudible question] Sermon titles. How important and where do I get

them. I think sermon titles are very important. They are what capture

the attention. They are part of the introduction. And therefore they

ought to be put in catching language. The first thing I do to get a

title is having worked through all of this so I thoroughly understand

the passage and also what I'm going to do with it is then ask myself,

now, what is the theme of the passage? What is it talking about.

Usually that will come to me in rather prosaic language. It's Paul's

view of the church, the nature of the church, or something like that.

Now all too often preachers stop with that. And they put that up on

their bulletin board and everybody that goes by says, Oh, he's going

to preach on Paul's view of the church. Well I must remind myself not

to be there Sunday morning. But if you think it through a bit, and you

try to capture the excitement of what Paul's view of the church is,

you'll come up with a phrase that will say that, but say it in a much

more engaging way. For instance, you might say, the most powerful body

on earth. Now that's Paul's view of the church. But it will also

capture the attention of somebody just walking by. So that's where I

get titles.

[inaudible question] Yes, or more, six or eight months if you want to.

Well, I try to spend enough time on commentaries that I understand in

general what other men are saying on this passage, and that I have

satisfied myself that it either is or isn't what the passage itself is

saying. And that varies widely with the passage. Some passages I have

to wrestle with sometimes for weeks until I feel I have answered all

the questions in my mind about what others have said about it. For

instance, Romans is a good point: Just exactly what does justification

by faith mean? Now there are several views of that, two primary ones

which are very important distinctions. I have to know what these views

are, see what the ground that others base their view is, and then make

a decision as to which one the passage actually does teach, and why I

think so. So that's what I would spend a lot of time with.

[inaudible question] Yes, I think outlines are very helpful. I give

them to my congregation after I've preached on them. And also all of

our messages are printed up. Here's a detailed outline of 1

Corinthians. What you see is the result of all the exegetical outlines

that I've worked through week after week after week. I tie them all

together because that's one book, Paul wrote it that way. And it all

has to fit together. That's just part of it ‑‑ there are four pages

like that. That's how detailed it is. See here's dealing with lust and

it's problems, and all the things he says about that, and then dealing

with life and it's dangers, and all the things that come on that, and

here's another page of it, and here I'm moving into the

spiritualities, having concluded all he says about the carnalities,

and then it comes into the relationship of fruit and gifts, the great

theme of the resurrection of the body, and finally the section on the

practicalities as well. Then I publish that for the benefit of our

people, and I find they really appreciate having an outline of the

whole book.

[inaudible question] No, I don't. I abominate that. I may spend some

time with other sections of Scripture that speak to my heart and

prepare me, but basically I let the very text I'm working with speak

first to me. That's what I want. I want to be the first one to sit

under the judgment of the Spirit, and the impact of the word of God. I

want to feel it in my own heart. And oftentimes in my preparation,

oftentimes I will just bow in adoration of God and what I see, or

break into tears over some sense of conviction, over something that

needs to be changed in my life that's ministered to me. And I find

that's very important.

[inaudible question] When do I discover in this preparation time what

the aim is. Well the aim of course is determined by the passage. And

in the process of making an exegetical outline is when I discover what

the aim of that passage is. Yes, basically every passage comes to one

single point, of what does God want me and my hearers to do.

Thank you for your attention. Tomorrow we'll go into the

accountability.

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Listen to this talk in RealAudio (from the PBC Web site).

(return to Expository Preaching and Worship Resources page)

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Powerful Expository Preaching, Part 3

The Accountability of the Preacher

By Ray Stedman, Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, CA. Delivered at

the first Congress on the Bible, San Diego, 1982

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Thank you very much. I too am sorry that we don't have more time to

cover what I think is an extremely important subject, and one that

takes a good deal more time than what we have had to allot to it. But

if I can just stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and get

you started, there are tremendous things that can be done by a deep

commitment of the will to become a preacher, a workman who needs not

to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. That's what we're

called to do.

I mentioned yesterday and the day before that we publish our messages

every week. They come in this form; they are printed; the message that

is delivered one Sunday will be in the racks in our church entrance on

the next Sunday. And so people are used to picking them up. And then

we mail these out all over the world to those who ask to be on our

mailing list. I meant to bring along a tablet and circulate it; if

someone would loan me a couple of sheets of paper to start one on each

side I would appreciate it. And just let people fill out their names

and addresses if you'd like to be on this mailing list. There is no

set fee for doing so, though at the first mailing you will receive an

explanatory mailing informing you of what the costs are to us, and

inviting you to give as the Lord lays on your heart. We make it

perfectly freewill, and those who can't afford to do so are welcome to

receive them anyhow. In the first mailing you will receive a catalog

of all the back messages, and then you are welcome to order those as

you like. This one I have up here ‑‑ and I'll leave these up here for

you to look over at the end of the series today ‑‑ for the most part

there is a brief 5‑message series on - Psalm 77 - Psalms 77},

and then there are some of the messages that were delivered on 1

Timothy, including that very knotty problem about women's ministry,

called "Adam's rib or women's lib?" and you can pick that up too if

you like. So after people have looked at them if you'd like to have

them you are welcome.

This hour I want to go back to the passage with which we originally

began, which as I said has been to me a great guideline on the

ministry. In the 4th chapter of 1 Corinthians the apostle is

describing his own ministry. Now you could hardly ask for a better

model of a preacher and teacher than the apostle Paul. The impact of

that remarkable ministry is with us yet today. This is the man who in

the providence of God and in the grace of God has changed history in

every generation since he lived. And he did it by the power of the

message that he spoke. This is that secret and hidden wisdom of God,

which contains within it the lost secrets of our humanity. These

truths when known by and practiced by men and women will bring them

out of their brokenness and fragmentation and hurt and emptiness, into

wholeness of life, and fulfill or produce the intended glory of

humanity. Now I believe that with all my heart. I believe this is the

business of the church ‑‑ to instruct the minds of the people, first

of all by the preaching and teaching of the word as to what these

secrets are ‑‑ God's view of life ‑‑ because God's view is reality.

And when you begin live biblically, you may for the first time begin

to deal with life realistically. It is the world that is confused and

following pipe dreams and illusions, and not even knowing their

illusions. And it is the business of the preacher to so understand the

scriptures under the illumination of the Holy Spirit and by diligent

effort in his own study to be able to impart to the people the truths

that will dispel the illusions and produce fruitful humanity.

This is a confused age in which we live, you know that. Somebody has

well said, "If you're not confused today, then you're not thinking

clearly." And how do you get people to thinking clearly? Well, by

getting them to think like God thinks! He is the ultimate realist; he

never deceives himself or anyone else. He always deals absolutely

realistically with everything. That's why therefore the business of

preaching is such an important calling ‑‑ because it is correcting all

the confusion and the illusion around about us.

Now we looked in the passage at two words the apostle uses to describe

the ministry: servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of

God. And in our first study we tried to explore what is meant by a

steward of the mysteries of God. I've just briefly reviewed what we

said along that line. Now I'd like to turn to the first of the words

which I will handle secondly in order, as the apostle himself does in

this passage: servants of Christ. If the steward, and what the apostle

says about that is discussing the responsibility of a preacher or

teacher, then the word "servant" which he employs is discussing the

accountability of a preacher or teacher: whom does he answer to? Who

is responsible for him?

Now as many of you know I'm sure, the word that is employed here is a

rather infrequently used word, it is not doulos (or douloi in the

plural), a bondslave, but it is the word huperetes, the underrower. It

derives its meaning from the military life of the Roman empire,

notably the warships, the war galleys of the Romans, which as we're

told in that ancient world had a low deck just a foot or so above the

water, and there were the seats of the rowers, the slaves, who were

for the most part chained to their seats. They were impressed into

servitude, many of them educated people, captives who had been taken

by the Roman armies. If you've seen the picture ‑‑ isn't it "The

Robe?" ‑‑ you have a vivid description of Ben Hur who served as such

an oarsman. And then in a slightly raised deck at the prow of the ship

where every rower could see him was the director, or the captain. And

it was he who gave orders to the rowers. And they had to instantly

obey his orders because this was a warship. They couldn't depend on

the winds to maneuver the ship in battle ‑‑ they were too uncertain,

they didn't blow in the right direction, it took too long to change

the sails ‑‑ and so in battle they used the oarsmen. And the ship had

to stop suddenly, back up even, turn to the right or left, and be very

maneuverable. And therefore the duty of the oarsmen was to instantly

obey the word of the captain.

Now that is the word that describes a servant of Christ, a preacher or

teacher of the word of God. He is to take his orders from the captain,

who of course is clearly stated to be Christ, the Lord Jesus himself.

He tells us what we are to say. We are not to get it from Time

Magazine, although we can use that as illustrative material, we are

not to get it from any other source, especially we are not to take it

from the secular convictions around us, because they are the very

thing we are warned against, the wisdom of the world. Human knowledge,

as we saw before, is perfectly acceptable to the believer, and we are

encouraged to explore every dimension and every channel of human

thought these days, and use it as we will. But how is it put to

practical work? That is where wisdom comes in, and human wisdom does

not lead men to God. In fact, it leads him to make, as we have ample

demonstration on every side today, the most atrocious blunders that

result in human misery and degradation and dehumanization and the

glutting of our city streets and the polluting of our atmosphere and

our rivers and all these things, and the failure to properly

distribute food throughout the earth ‑‑ that's all the result of human

wisdom. And everywhere the word of God challenges the wisdom of the

world. It is the business of preaching, you see, to set forth the

wisdom of God.

Now, we are to keep our eyes, therefore, upon the captain. And the

figure which is employed here is particularly emphasizing the

singleness of purpose of a preacher, the one from whom alone he takes

his orders. And the apostle now goes on to develop this in the passage

that follows. He is writing to these Corinthians who, like everyone

else, were anxious to tell him how he should conduct his ministry.

When you are dealing with the accountability of a preacher, every one

of us has discovered that there are hundreds of volunteers who offer

themselves in this capacity. And we have to be aware of that fact, and

the apostle even suffered from this phenomenon. And he writes to them

these rather startling words: "But with me it is a very small thing

that I should be judged by you." I imagine that was a very popular

verse in Corinth. I imagine that they printed it on little cards and

put it up on their refrigerator to remember. Memorize. It is a very

small thing, said the apostle, that I should ever be judged by you.

No, they must have felt very offended when he wrote this. But he wrote

it nevertheless. "Or by any human court." Literally, it is "by man's

day." I do not even judge myself, he says. I am not aware of anything

against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who

judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before

the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in

darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. And then every

man will receive his commendation from God."

Now in that passage there are stated clearly four possibilities of

judgment of a preacher's ministry and message. The apostle recognizes

them, lists them here for us, and they constitute subtle or very open

pressures upon him to influence what it is he teaches. I think it very

instructive that we have these clearly in mind.

The first one we could call congregational evaluation. That is the

pressure upon the preacher. Every congregation has certain methods by

which it either covertly or overtly puts pressure on the preacher to

change his message. And this he needs to be aware of. Now, as we have

seen, Paul's declaration on that is that's at the bottom of my list,

he said. I pay least attention to that. It is a very small thing. You

know, it is amazing, isn't it, that we listen sometimes to people who

are suffering from spiritual malnutrition and indigestion and various

other complications and diseases, and expect them to analyze their own

problems and prescribe for their own disease. Now no doctor would

allow that. A good doctor never listens to the patients' analysis of

what's wrong with him. Now he may listen, but he doesn't really give

heed to it. He must trust his own superior medical knowledge. Now I

grant you that doctors are human beings, and they can make mistakes,

and sometimes because doctors do not take adequate time to analyze the

patient may be right and the doctor wrong. But in general no doctor

expects the patient to analyze the disease. And when we are preaching

the word of God ‑‑ the healing word to a hurting congregation ‑‑ we

must not expect the congregation to analyze what it needs. It is God

who analyses. That is why Paul says, "It is a very small thing that I

should be judged by you."

Stedman 05

My good friend and dear friend Stuart Briscoe, whom many of you know

‑‑ he's right now up in the Bay Area preaching while I am down here ‑‑

pastor of the Elmbrook Church outside of Milwaukee Wisconsin ‑‑ has

pointed out that there are three major ways by which congregational

pressure comes upon the preacher. He calls them adulation, which

swells the head, and manipulation, which ties the hands, and

opposition which breaks the heart. And I am sure there is no teacher

or preacher here who hasn't experienced these.

Adulation, which swells the head. When I was a young preacher in Palo

Alto, there was a woman in our congregation, a very remarkable person.

She had a fixation on the color purple. She only dressed in purple. I

have never seen her in any other color. She had her house painted

purple, and she actually dyed her cat purple. And so she was known in

our congregation as Mrs Purple. She was a Texan originally, a very

outspoken, forthright women; she used to stand up in the meetings of

the congregation at times and say, "I am a woman of very few words,

but I use them all the time." She did indeed. She was a wealthy woman,

and a very generous woman. And for some reason because I blessed her

heart in some of my earlier messages she took a liking to me. And she

used to feed me a line of propaganda about what a great preacher I was

that was very difficult for me to handle. She used to come up to me at

the end of a message with tears running down her face ‑‑ this was

never a put on with her at all. It was always real. But with tears

running down her face, she would say, "Oh, Mr Stedman!" (She was the

only one in our congregation who ever called me that ‑‑ most of them

call me Ray, which is fine with me, but she called me Mr Stedman.)

"Oh, Mr Stedman! You can make the truth so simple, and so clear. What

a marvelous preacher you are!" And I just took that all in. I thought

it was wonderful. I had forgotten that there was a doctor in our

congregation that I used to play golf with. And one day I asked him.

"Doc," I said, "What is the most remarkable thing that you have ever

discovered about the human anatomy in your medical practice?" And I've

never forgotten his words ‑‑ I didn't expect them. He said, "Well, the

most remarkable thing I've ever discovered is that when you pat it on

the back the head swells up." And I am afraid this happened to me. Now

what made it more difficult was that this woman had several very

pronounced opinions about the Scriptures. She didn't like the theme of

death at all. She was one of those people who ran from the word death.

She didn't want death talked about, she didn't want any references to

funerals or burials or any form of dying or death. She was a

relatively young Christian, and many suffer from that. And I found

myself finally paying heed to that. I found myself downplaying the

themes of death when I came to them in the Scripture, and passing over

them lightly and saying very little about death. She didn't like pain

or suffering, and I found myself on occasion watering down passages

that dealt with the fact that Christian were called to suffer, for her

sake. Until the Lord brought them to my attention and I felt deeply

convicted. I think the passage that set me free was reading in the

book of Galatians where the apostle says, "If you then are a pleaser

of men, then you are no longer a servant of Christ." And dealing with

that I had to face the fact that I could not temper my message because

of the adulation of this dear woman. And I began to preach, and she

didn't like some of it, and she told me about it, but God also used

those very messages to change her mind about these themes. And by the

end of her life she had a totally different view of death and

suffering.

Now there is adulation that swells the head, and there is manipulation

that ties the hands. Every preacher, especially every young preacher,

knows that in every congregation there is a built in power structure.

And it isn't always the official board. There are unofficial leaders

and bosses in church congregations who know how either by open threat

or by subtle implication to manipulate a preacher, to get him to

change his message, or avoid certain themes, or to come on strong with

a certain program. They are very good at it. I don't want to be

misunderstood here. Preachers are not to be bosses, to be kings over

their congregations. They are not to be the only ones who consider

what is preached ‑‑ elders are charged with that responsibility as

well. And there is a team play in the congregation that is very

important and very biblical, where the pastors and elders together are

to be continually seeking the mind of the Lord. If I were to put my

finger on what I would say is the greatest weakness of the church in

the world today, it would be the loss of the sense of the immediate

headship of Christ in the local congregation. We think of Jesus as

head of the church at large, but it is very rarely that you run up

against a church in which the board, the elders, or leaders of the

church really think that Jesus in in their midst directing the

activities and programs of that church. Oh, we all pay lip service to

that. But to really expect him to give leadership, to answer

questions, to open doors ‑‑ that's a missing element in most

congregations. But that's what you read in the book of Acts everywhere

you turn, isn't it? The leadership, the overall strategy, the

direction of the church, came from the Spirit: "The Spirit said to the

church at Antioch, Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work to

which I have called them." Now that is proper. But there can also be a

lot of improper manipulating, of pressure put upon pastors and elders

alike to follow traditional roles. Just like in the Lord's days, the

community of God is in the grip of much tradition that people don't

recognize as such, and are controlled by, which, as Jesus said of the

tradition of his day, substitutes itself for the direction of God. He

said, "You set aside the commands of God and teach in their place the

traditions of man." Now every church board and every pastor must be

continually examining what the church does as to whether it is

tradition or biblical. And whether the tradition is one which reflects

biblical principles or not. Not all traditions are wrong. Tradition in

itself is not wrong. But it needs to be constantly evaluated. And the

pastor must be aware of this tendency on the part of people who

instinctively believe that the way they were brought up is the proper

way to run a church. Now we all suffer from that. And he has to be

very gentle and understanding when he deals with that kind of a

problem. But he must not allow himself to be manipulated by those who

rest upon tradition alone.

And then there is opposition which breaks the heart. I want to tell

you as I have traveled around this country and in many countries of

the world everywhere I go I run into wonderful, splendid young

preachers whose hearts are broken, who have been turned aside from a

most promising ministry by the callous, cruel treatment they have

received in the churches that have called thme. I run into them all

the time ‑‑ last week I met a young man who said, "What would you do

if you were in my place? What would you do if your elders called you

in and said to you, Look, you've been here a year now. And we like a

lot of your preaching, but there are a couple of things we would like

you to understand. First, we want you to know this is our church, it

is not yours. We were here before you came, and we are going to be

here when you leave. And some of the things you are suggesting based

upon the Scriptures are not what we appreciate. We don't want them.

And this is our church, and you have to adjust to us, and not we to

you.'" That's what they said. And furthermore they said, "We hired you

to do the preaching here. You are our employee, and you take

directions from us as to what you do or say in your official capacity

as a pastor." Now, he said, "What would you say to them?"

Well, I said, I'll tell you what I'd do. I would invite them, I would

say, "Fellows, we are going to have a board meeting next Thursday

night, whenever it would be. And would you please bring your Bibles

with you ‑‑ we're going to have a Bible study before the meeting

begins." And when the meeting started, I said to him, I would take the

Bible and say to them, "Now I have been told that this church belongs

to you men. You were here before I came. Now I want you to open your

Bibles and find where it says the church belongs to the congregation

or the elders. Because I'd like to show you a verse where Jesus says,

On this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell will not

prevail against it.'" And it will be impossible for us to function

together until we understand this church is neither yours nor mine; it

belongs to the Lord Jesus. He has the right to tell us how to

function, what to believe, how to operate in various ways; he has sent

the apostles to tell us that our business is to study this word and

find out. (My heart said Hallelujah last night when Ed Hill was

telling us in that powerful way of his that he took his church and sat

down with the book, and they went through the book together.) And

furthermore I said, "I would tell them, look. We need to get another

thing clear. According to the Scriptures a minister is not the hired

employee of a church. Now I don't care what the IRS says. A minister

is not the hired employee ‑‑ he is a brother who has come to share

together in the ministry with them. And as brothers they all have

input, all the leaders together, following the direction of the Lord.

But we must never forget that the Lord Jesus himself in

- Matthew 23 - Matthew 23} - verse 8 - Matthew 23:8

said to his disciples, "All you are brothers and only one is your

master." You see, the idea that is widespread today that the pastor

has a unique kind of authority in the church is not biblical. "One is

your master; all you are brothers. " And it is very important to

establish these. Well, he said, "If I did that, they would fire me!"

And I said, "That may well be true. You could very well lose this

church over that. You need to say it graciously, you need to say it

gently, you need to say it lovingly, you need to say, "I love this

church, I love you men, I have enjoyed being with you this year, I

want to continue. But until we understand the basis on which the Lord

himself establishes it, we can't work together." And you must draw

that line as a servant of Christ, you see.

Well, he did. He went back and told them and they fired him. But he

got another church just a few weeks later, and it's flourishing and

growing and abundantly manifesting the power and grace of God. So

there's congregational evaluation; Paul puts it at the bottom of the

list. And he says, "It is a very small thing with me." Not because

their opinion was not important to him, he always listened to people

‑‑ in chapter 9 of this very letter, he says, "This is my response to

those who would examine me." And he gives a very gracious answer to

their challenges and their problems. But he says, "They do not

ultimately determine what I am going to do or say."

Then there is what he lists as man's day, or what we would call

societal evaluation. Here is another subtle pressure upon the

preacher: Society, the opinion of the community in which you live. It

is amazing to watch the media today and see how evangelical preachers

appear in the media. It is very rare that you find any approval. It is

almost always either a kind of contempt, a thinly veiled disdain of

them, or occasionally a kind of gentle toleration of them, as the

village idiots. You know, you don't attack an idiot, you just treat

him nicely and quietly and let him go his way. And most protestant

evangelicals appear in the media in that capacity. It's either that,

or there is sometimes an overblown patronizing, a lifting up, an

exalting of the highest sort, making much over an individual. And

occasionally you find religious figures in our country today that are

treated like that. But both are the weapon of the enemy to try to

destroy, and bend, and shift the preaching of the pastor. They are

both an attempt to manipulate, and it is a subtle attempt. All of us

feel it. We want to be known, we want to be respected, we want to be

honored, and it is not wrong necessarily to feel that way. When James

and John came to our Lord and asked for positions of power one at the

right hand and one at the left hand, he never rebuked them for their

desire ‑‑ but he told them God's way of giving it to you will not be

at all what you expect; he's going to do something that you won't

like. He will fulfill your request, but not in the way you think. And

therefore we need to be very much aware of the subtleties of desire

for position, fame, influence with others, recognition by worldly

standards.

You know I became sensitive to this to the point that I can't do what

many preachers do and stand at the door as my congregation goes out.

Because everybody comes out and says what a wonderful person you are,

what a great preacher you are, and all this stuff ‑‑ and I found

that's too hard to handle. I don't think it would bother me as much

now, but when I was a young preacher it did. And I finally just said,

"I'm not going to do that any more ‑‑ I will stand up in front, and if

people want to talk to me I'm there and available and we can sit down

and talk at length, but this automatically, mechanically passing on to

a preacher words that flatter him but don't mean anything I think is a

very dangerous practice."

So there is man's judgment, man's day. And the apostle says there is a

third level of judgment. "I do not even judge myself. I'm not aware of

anything against myself," he says, "I've judged everything I know;

I've faced in my life what the Spirit of God has shown me to be

wrong." This is why the apostle always says that he considers himself

blameless. Now a blameless person doesn't mean a sinless person,

because none of us would be blameless under that measure, even the

apostle Paul. What it means is somebody has handled his sin

biblically. He has confessed, he has received the forgiveness of God.

And therefore he is blameless. And this was the apostle's position

about himself. He said that he was aware of failures, times in his

ministry when he felt like he was weak, and trembling and fearful. He

tells us this openly. He says, "When I was in Asia I went through an

experience that so crushed me and discouraged me and defeated me I

felt I had received the sentence of death."

How many pastors today ever confess to their congregation that they

are sorely tried, sorely tempted. At the beginning of our body life

services, a dozen years ago, I remember trying to introduce the idea

of admitting failure among us as saints, that we might pray for one

another, and bear one another's burdens. And we found it very

difficult to get people to do that. No one wanted to confess they were

struggling in any area even though we knew many of them were. And

someone suggested to me that leadership has to lead. And since I was

leading that meeting, I had to start with my failures. At that time we

were going through a very hurtful struggle with one of our daughters

who had gone away to a Christian college, and had run up against

things that had shocked her and disappointed her and she sought out

the help of what was called a Christian psychologist who promptly told

her that all her problems arose from her evangelical faith ‑‑ that her

parents were at fault, and her upbringing was at fault, and she came

home to us hostile and angry. And we reacted wrongly, and didn't know

how to handle it. Things were in distressing turmoil in our home. And

I told the congregation, I asked them to pray for me. It was painful,

hard to do. I even shared minor things that I had felt. I was up here

at forest home staying in a cabin up there, and there was a little

coffee server there, a cute little thing. And I thought, "That's a

cute little thing ‑‑ I could put that in my bag and take it home with

me." And then I thought, "Well, that would be stealing, I couldn't do

that." But I told the congregation the momentary thought of stealing a

coffee server had crossed my mind. Some of them were a bit appalled by

that, they didn't think I would do that. But I found it rather

profitable, because the next morning there were two boxes on my desk

‑‑ and when I opened them up there were two of those coffee servers!

My people didn't trust me very far. So that Sunday night I shared how

all week long I had been struggling against stealing a color

television set. But I have to admit they haven't risen to that level

of spiritual life yet. But you know we began to admit that we were

having spiritual struggles. A lady stood up and said, " I wish you

would pray for me and my husband, we haven't spoken to each other all

week." And I said, "How many other couples have had that problem this

week?" And a half dozen hands went up. And then she saw this, and she

was encouraged by it. And then she said, "I'll tell you what the

trouble is too. He won't pick up his socks. He leaves them laying all

over the house, and I have to pick them up after him." I said, "How

many other wives have husbands who won't pick up their socks?" A

hundred hands went up. We began to pray about the couples that had

lost communication like that.

\webpage{http://www.expository.org/expository3.htm

Stedman 06

Now you see Paul confessed his failures, his problems, his pressures,

his struggles. And he says, "I don't know anything against myself. But

I'm not acquitted thereby. I don't see deeply enough, I don't see

clearly enough. There may be things I'm doing wrong right now I'm not

aware of." Some of us having breakfast this morning were looking back

over our ministries, and saying that, how we see so clearly now the

ignorance that we had way back at the beginning, the things we didn't

see then and did that were hurtful to others, that now we recognize

were wrong, but we didn't know it then. And so you see no pastor is

able to judge himself, either to the degree of his failures or the

degree of his successes. We can't pronounce judgment in this area, and

it is a mistake to try to do so. Our tendency is to cover over all the

failures and only look at the successes. You remember the young

preacher who after an especially blessed Sunday, when he felt the

Spirit had just poured out an anointing upon him, and the whole

congregation was moved by his message. He was driving home afterwards

with his wife, and thinking through the service. He turned to her and

said, "I wonder how many great preachers there are in the world." And

her answer was very perceptive. "One less than you think." We can't,

you see, judge ourselves in this.

But, says the apostle, there is a fourth level here. "It is the Lord

who judges me." Now notice there is a very subtle shift here in this

passage. He says, "It is the Lord who judges." It is the present,

indicative, active. He is NOW judging me. And all of us know that this

is an experience we've all gone through, those time that we are aware,

as the Spirit of God opens our eyes to some of the things we have

done, and encourages us with some of the things we think are failures.

The Lord opens our eyes, and encourages us by sending someone to us

with a word of blessing when we didn't expect it. Or we sense the

subtle pressure of the Spirit to look again at something that we

thought was a success, and we see that we hurt somebody, or that we

exalted ourselves, our motive was wrong. And I'm sure if we threw this

open for testimony, many could testify to those experiences. Now

that's what Paul in - 1 Corinthians 10 - 1 Corinthians 10},

remember, calls "the judging of the Lord." If we would judge

ourselves, he says, as God shows these things to us we would not be

judged with the world. But if we don't judge ourselves, the Lord often

sends trials, sometimes illnesses, chastenings into our life, to help

us to see ourselves. So in one sense there is a judging of the Lord

going on all through our present experience. And how helpful it is.

Perhaps in this very Congress many of you have felt that judging

touch. It's always gentle, it's always understanding, it's always

affirmative. That is, it never crushes us or condemns us without a

word of support and encouragement. But it's there, and we ought to

listen to it.

But there's still another level. That is the final judgment. And Paul

goes on to speak of it. "Therefore do not pronounce judgment ‑‑ any of

these levels of judgment, don't take it seriously and ultimately

except the Lord's ‑‑ before the Lord comes, who will bring to light

the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of

the heart." And then he adds an encouraging word: "Then everyone will

receive commendation from God." You see the judgment seat of Christ of

which he speaks in other passages is for believers. But it's not just

a time of condemnation; it's also a time of commendation. And in that

day he's going to settle all the problems, and all the issues, and as

it were take us back and walk back through all the experiences of our

life, and just comment on everything that he wants to bring to our

attention, and tell us what he thought of it. I'm sure there are

experiences ‑‑ I know in my own life there are experiences which I'll

be eager for him to see: Oh Lord, remember when I took that couple

into my home who were destitute and depressed and gave them a good

meal and fed them and clothed them and sent them out? Lord, let's take

a look at that! And he'll take a look at it and say, Hmm. Why did you

do that? And I won't be able to kid me or him at that point. I'll have

to say, Well, it was to make myself feel good, Lord. And I remember

how I was sure the rest of the people on the staff knew about it, so

that I'd get approval. And he'd say, Right. And you've had your

reward. Now let's go on to something else.

And there may be those times when I just hope he won't look at

something. "Oh, what a failure that was, what a mess I made of that!

Lord, could we walk on by that one?" No, he'll say, that's the one I

want to look at. You know you thought you were a failure. But that was

the very moment ‑‑‑ I can introduce to you 10 people whose lives were

changed by that moment that you've never known about until now. That's

the judgment seat of Christ: the evaluation of our Lord of what's been

going on.

Now I want to conclude by bringing this to bear on the general thrust

of the apostle's message here. You see, he's talking about our

preaching ministry, our faithfulness as stewards of the mysteries of

God; how well we did in the area of proclaiming the truth. And in this

connection I always think of an incident told to me by my dear patron

saint, Dr H.A. Ironside, long time pastor of the great Moody Church in

Chicago. I had the privilege as a young man of knowing Dr Ironside

very well, and in fact being invited by him to travel with him as his

chauffeur, secretary, and companion, during what proved to be the last

summer of his life, the summer of 1950, just before I went to Palo

Alto to begin my ministry there. And we drove all over the east coast,

and into the west, and I had opportunity for long talks with Dr

Ironside. And he'd tell me a lot of very helpful things. He was a

delightful raconteur of stories. And I think without a doubt he was

probably the world's fastest eater. I haven't checked it in the

Guinness book of records, but I think he probably could have held the

record. When we'd go into a restaurant and order a meal, and they'd

serve us at the same time, while I was getting my knife and fork

arranged, and my napkin unfolded and on my lap, he'd be through. And

then he'd sit there and he'd tell me stories that would break me up so

I could hardly eat at times, or melt me in tears.

And one of them I remember very vividly. He told me when he was a boy

here in Los Angeles, 14 years of age, he began to preach on the

streets. But he got a job as a helper to a shoemaker ‑‑ cobblers, they

called them then. And all shoes were made in little shops. Each man

made his own pair. And he got a job with a believer, a wonderful,

godly man, whose name was Dan. And it was young Harry Ironside's task

to take leather which had been soaked all night in a tub of water to

toughen it, and then take it on an iron anvil and with a wooden mallet

beat the water out of the leather. And by that process so toughen it

and yet soften it so that it was both pliable and enduring. And then

the shoes would be made from it. But it was a tedious task ‑‑ just

endlessly beating at leather until all the water was gone. And what

made it even more difficult was that just a few doors down the street

was another cobbler's shop run by a very godless man, a blasphemous,

profane man. And one day Harry Ironside walking by noticed that this

man didn't bother to beat the water out of the leather. He'd pick the

leather up out of the tub and cut out a piece, and nail it on the shoe

with the water splashing in every direction. And one day Harry

ventured to stop, and said to him, "Sir, you know I work down the

street at Dan's shop, and I noticed that you don't bother to beat the

water out of your leather. Why is that?" And he said the man gave him

a rather evil wink, and said to him, "Ah, they come back all the

quicker this way." So Harry Ironside went back to his shop and he said

to his employer, "Sir, why do we do this? It's such a hard job to beat

all this water out, it takes so long! And the man down the street says

if you just take it out you can put it on the shoe and the customers

will all come back quicker this way." Well, he said the old man looked

at him. And he didn't say a word. He just took off his apron, and he

took him by the hand, led him over to a bench and sat him down. And he

said, "Harry, I apologize to you for not having told you more fully

what is involved. But you know, son, I expect to see every pair of

shoes I've ever made in a big pile at the judgment seat of Christ. And

I expect the Lord to take those shoes and go through every one, and

examine the work I did. And then I expect, I imagine oftentimes, he'll

take one and he'll look at me and say, "Dan, that's not up to par. You

didn't do a very good job there." But others, he'll encourage me by

saying, "Dan, that was a splendid job." You know, when I make shoes, I

keep remembering that. And I want to so make shoes that every shoe I

make will pass the judgment of the Lord at the judgment seat of

Christ."

Harry Ironside said, "I've never forgotten that. And I resolved in my

own heart that every sermon I preach will be able to pass the judgment

of my Lord." I've never forgotten that story either. I think all my

sermon notes and perhaps videotapes of how I've delivered them are

going to be stacked up beside the judgment seat of Christ. And there

the Lord is going to go through them and say to me, "Ray, you didn't

do so well on this. You shirked your preparation time. You didn't

really grasp this passage, did you?" And I'll have to say, Yes, Lord,

you know all things. But what I really pray for, and what I really

want, and what motivates my heart deeply, is that every message I

preach in fear and trembling, with the realization of the poor human

vessel the Lord has to work with will nevertheless pass the judgment

of the Lord because I depend both in the preparation and the delivery

on the Spirit of the living God and am willing to work at it until I

understand what he has to say.

Now I think that's what the apostle Paul is talking about. That's the

accountability of a preacher. As underrowers of Christ, obedient to

what the captain says, we do our work in view of the judgment seat of

Christ.

Well, may God bless you as you go back to your work and to your

ministry. And I hope this has proved of some help to you in getting

ready to preach. Anybody have any questions you'd like to ask before

we dismiss?

Does the Scripture - 1 Corinthians 12:28 - 1 Corinthians

12:28} indicate that the gift of a pastor/teacher is a higher or more

important gift than those listed later on in the verse. - 1

Corinthians 12:28 - 1 Corinthians 12:28}: And God has appointed in the

church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers

of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in

various types of tongues. My answer would be that I do not think these

are listed in order of importance, but rather in order of appearance

in history. The historical occurrence of these. First were sent the

apostles, they had to initiate the founding of the church. Then came

the prophets such as you find at the church in Antioch, who came along

and spoke the word of God interpreting it to them. And this was

followed by teachers, because it is the work of the teacher to explain

the word of the prophet. And then in turn there come the workers of

miracles and so on. So that these are not listed in order of

importance. And judging on what else is said in - 1

Corinthians 12 - 1 Corinthians 12}, we are not to rank gifts in order

of importance, other than the ranking which the apostle gives which

seems to put the gift of prophesying as that must useful within the

church. But remember he said the eye cannot say to the foot I have no

need of you. We cannot disregard the weaker members, but as he puts it

himself, these weaker members are often treated with a greater sense

of honor.

How should we respond to those who are right in their judgment; that

is, those who are preaching outside (well, I guess he means those

preaching outside the hall here) though it may or may not be done

properly without encouragement? Footnote, they are basically saying

the church is not doing enough. I haven't been able to stop and even

listen to these young people who are preaching outside the hall but I

would say that in general I wouldn't try to stop them. I think there

is often a kind of zeal without knowledge that is manifested

frequently by younger Christians. But I am hesitant even to resist

that because our Lord didn't. Remember he sent out the apostles to

preach in the cities and villages of Galilee even before they were

filled with the Spirit. He sent them out with the knowledge that their

attitudes were carnal, their zeal was fleshly, and yet he sent them.

Like D.L. Moody said, I'd rather have somebody who's using the gifts

he's got even though he doesn't use them rightly than have people who

have a great deal of knowledge and doing nothing at all. I wouldn't

particularly try to encourage them, I'd seek if I could and had the

time an opportunity to become their friends and help them. You never

help somebody by just condemnation alone. That's forbidden to us

actually in the word of God. But if a brother be overtaken in a fault

then let those who are spiritual among you restore him in a spirit of

meekness, of gentleness, remembering yourselves along this line.

Could you share some of the errors that you made in your early

preaching ministry so we could benefit from your mistakes. Well, that

may take a little while. I think one thing, like most young men I came

on too severely. My tendency, and I've been taught, I'm afraid, to

sort of blast people, and to lay heavy trips on them, and challenge

them if they didn't act I was going to resign, and this sort of thing.

And I quickly learned that that is not God's way of doing things. That

a preacher must lead people. Sheep can be led, but it's hard to drive

them. But if we lead them gently they'll respond. But nobody likes to

be blasted at. I remember the words of Jesus when he said to his

disciples, I have yet many things to say unto you but you cannot bear

them yet. You see there's a self restraint on his part in which he

knew they were lacking, he knew there were things they needed to

learn, but he knew they weren't ready for them yet. And many a pastor

has to learn that his people are resisting not because they are trying

deliberately to oppose and wreck the work of God but because they need

a level of understanding of truth and life before they are ready to

act on these things. And this is his business, to make them ready for

that.

Our time is gone. Thank you very much for your attention.

‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

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Listen to this talk in RealAudio (from the PBC Web site).

(return to Expository Preaching and Worship Resources page)

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Using Learning Styles to Reach Everyone you Teach

Using Learning Styles to Reach Everyone you Teach

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Each person has a unique approach to learning. When we are taught in

ways that honor our preference, we learn faster, enjoy learning more

and are more likely to put what we learn into practice. For too long,

volunteer teachers and parents have assumed that all the best minds

learn in similar ways. Mistake! And, when we make that mistake, we

lessen the potential of our children, teens and even adults.

This session will encourage participants to identify their preferred

style. More importantly, they will identify the learning styles that

are least like their own. Students with these styles will most likely

not thrive in their classes. This session will make teaching more

difficult‑‑perhaps! But it will also make our teaching much more

effective. Practical! Fun! And easy to put into practice next Sunday!

(And here's a little extra: Most of us marry our opposite and spend

the rest of our lives trying to make that person think right! Knowing

about learning styles is great for your marriage!

Seminar Outline:

PDF File‑ 46K

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CCN LEADERSHIP TRAINING SERIES

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR APRIL 18, 2002

Using Learning Styles To Reach Everyone You Teach

Marlene LeFever

Director of Church Relations, Cook Communications Ministries

Author of Learning Styles; Creative Teaching Methods; Parties with a

Purpose

Intergenerational Groundwork for Discipleship and Evangelism

PRESESSION

(Complete this before the program starts)

On one side of the mirror outline, draw your mind the way you think

others see you. On the other side,

draw your mind the way you know it really is. Use squiggles, symbols

or a few words. Save your

sketch to show to other teachers after the session.

CCN Leadership Seminar April 18, 2002 Page 2

I. INTRODUCTION

God gave each of us a unique approach to learningour learning style.

Because we have a preferred

style, we often over‑use our preferences. We may ignore or

under‑appreciate other styles preferred by

our students. We are gifted by God to equip children, teens and adults

to reach their full potential for

his glory. Learning styles! This is one important tool to help us

successfully carry out our God‑given

assignment.

In this session you will learn more about yourself and your students.

Youll celebrate the Natural Cycle of Learning.

Learning Styles help us teachers teach students the way God made

themnot the way we used to think

he made them, and especially not the way we sometimes wish he had made

them!

Working Definition of Learning Styles:

II. OVERVIEW OF EACH STYLE

A. Quadrant One: The Imaginative Learner

Learns by listening and sharing ideas.

At risk in Sunday school and school because:

1.

2.

Other Characteristics

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CCN Leadership Seminar April 18, 2002 Page 3

B. Quadrant Two: The Analytic Learner

Learns by thinking and watching.

Traditional student.

Other Characteristics

C. Quadrant Three: The Common Sense Learner

Learns by testing, experimenting, hands‑on experience.

At risk in Sunday school and school because:

1.

2.

Other Characteristics

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CCN Leadership Seminar April 18, 2002 Page 4

D. Quadrant Four: The Dynamic Learner

Learns by experimenting.

Demonstrates the but mindset.

Other Characteristics

III. USING THE FOUR BASIC STYLES TO TEACH AROUND THE NATURAL

LEARNING CYCLE

Mini True/False Test (Circle the correct answer.)

True False Students learn best and enjoy learning more when they are

placed with

other students and a teacher who have the same learning style strength

as

they do.

True False Students learn best and enjoy learning more when they are

placed with

students who have different strengths, different styles, as long as

they know their

preferred style will be honored by the teacher.

A. Quadrant One: The Imaginative Learner:

Basic question these students

answer:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On the Natural Learning Cycle, this question comes first. Students get

involved. Their interest is

captured because they know that what they will learn has meaning to

them.

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B. Quadrant Two: The Analytic Learner:

Basic question these students

answer:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On the Natural Learning Cycle, this question comes second. It is the

heart of the lesson, because its

the Bible content section.

C. Quadrant Three: The Common Sense Learner

Basic question these students

answer:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is the third step in the Natural Learning Cycle. Its the

Laboratory question that asks students to

practice, in the safety of the classroom, how what they learned from

the Bible is applied today.

D. Quadrant Four: The Dynamic Learner

Basic question these students

answer:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is the final step in the Natural Learning Cycle. Students decide

how to use what they have learned

for Jesus in creative, exciting, individualized ways.

IV. DISCUSSION

Discuss how students with different learning styles like to learn and

how they dont like to learn

(teaching methods).

With someone who has a different learning style from you, discuss this

question: What are some

ways I hate to learn?

My preferred style:

My partners preferred style:

Ways I dont like to learn:

Ways my partner doesnt like to learn:

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CCN Leadership Seminar April 18, 2002 Page 6

How students like and dont like to learn

(Put your notes from the debriefing here)

What are some ways Imaginative Learners dont like to learn?

Imaginative Learners Weaknesses:

What are some ways Analytic Learners dont like to learn?

Analytic Learners Weaknesses:

What are some ways Common Sense Learners dont like to learn?

Common Sense Learners Weaknesses:

What are some ways Dynamic Learners dont like to learn?

Dynamic Learners Weaknesses:

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V. CONCLUSION

If I teach only using my preferred style, these are the student styles

I am most likely to miss are:

These are the names of students I suspect have styles very different

from mine These are the students I

am most likely to miss.

Because I now know more about how students learn, I will make the

following changes in the way I

teach:

POST‑SESSION:

Show your mirror to at least three other teachers and explain what it

illustrates about you. Talk about

what this session meant to you personally.

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Parties with a PurposeIntergenerational Groundwork for Discipleship

and

Evangelism by Marlene LeFever

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Preaching That Connects

- 2/2008.101

Preaching That Connects

Tuesday, January 22, 2002

IMPORTANT NOTE‑ Dr. Robert Smith was not able to be a part of this

show due to illness. As a result we added a portion with Kevin Miller

and Stanley Long that do not appear in the outline. Please note that

Dr. Smith's portion of the outline did not appear in the broadcast.

Your sermon time is a key opportunity to let God speak through you to

impact the souls of your people. In today's society, connecting with

your congregation is a challenge every preacher must face. How can you

make the truths of God's Word applicable to the realities of

contemporary culture? How can you connect with today's hearers to

feed, inspire, and equip them?

On Tuesday, January 22, a panel of expert practitioners will bring to

CCN the answers they have developed in response to these questions.

Lon Allison, John Ortberg, and Kevin Miller will train you and your

preaching team to effectively connect with your contemporary hearers.

Using video examples from outstanding preachers around the country,

our experts will each offer proven principles and practical

suggestions to help you maximize your effectiveness. In addition, in a

special videotaped segment, Haddon Robinson will share his expertise

in the area of bridging from the Bible to contemporary application.

Then, in a roundtable discussion moderated by Lon Allison, our

presenters will share ideas and discuss what makes for successful

preaching. During our live Q&A session, you'll have the opportunity to

direct your questions to the speakers and to benefit from the

questions asked by your peers around the country.

Seminar Outline:

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Lon Allison, Director, Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College

Kevin Miller, Executive Editor of PreachingToday.com

John Ortberg, Teaching Pastor, Willow Creek Community Church

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\webpage{http://www.ccn.tv/programming/archive00‑02.htm#041102

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CCN LEADERSHIP TRAINING SERIES

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR JANUARY 22, 2002

Preaching That Connects

Part One ‑ Preaching With Spiritual Passion: Romance in the Pulpit

Dr. Robert Smith

I. Sermonic "Singabration": The Need to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Over the Sermon

A. Expository Exultation (John Piper) ‑

B. The Truth With the Tune (The Angels on Christmas Night) ‑

C. Turning Ink Into Blood (From Personal Address to Personal Witness)

‑

D. Sanctified Sequencing: Reversing the Order of the Application and

the Climactic ‑

II. Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ For the Pulpit Defined and Analyzed

A. "En Theos" (Enthusiasm) ‑

B. A Gardner C. Taylor Response ‑ "The Sweet Sorrow of Sunday Morning"

‑

C. A James Earl Massey Response ‑ "The Burdensome Joy of Preaching" ‑

D. A Rudolf Otto Response ‑ "The Mysterium Tremendum" ‑

E. A Henry Mitchell Response ‑ "A Child Remembers Best What He or She

Enjoys Most" ‑

III. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Historical Landscape: From Aristotle

to Craddock

A. From Deduction to Induction ‑

B. From "Cogito Ergo Sum" (I Think, Therefore I Am) to "Sensuo Ergo

Sum

(I Feel, Therefore I Am) ‑

C. Cranial and/or Cardiological Communication (Has God Joined the Two

Together?) ‑

CCN Leadership Seminar January 22, 2002 Page 2

IV. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Preaching With Spiritual Passion

A. Spiritual Spontaneity: Appropriating Passion ‑

B. Narrative Structure: Expository Preaching in a Narrative World

(Haddon Robinson) ‑

C. A Holistic Approach ‑

D. Pneumatological Presence Versus Anthropological Assertion ‑

V. A Biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ For Preaching With Spiritual Passion

A. II Samuel 18:33

B. - Jeremiah 20:9 - Jeremiah 20:9

C. - Matthew 9:36 - Matthew 9:36

D. - Matthew 22:37 - Matthew 22:37

E. - Matthew 23:37 - Matthew 23:37

F. - Mark 3:13‑15 - Mark 3:13‑15

G. - Luke 1:63 - Luke 1:63}, - 64 - Luke 1:64} and

- Luke 10:16 - Luke 10:16

H. - Acts 2:4 - Acts 2:4} and - 4:31 - Acts 4:31

I. - Acts 4:20 - Acts 4:20} (Ignited Involuntariness)

VI. Romantic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Spiritual Passion In the Pulpit

A. The Voice of the Text ‑

B. The Voice of Culture ‑

C. The Voice of the Congregation ‑

D. The Voice of the Preacher ‑

E. The Voice of Liturgy ‑

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CCN Leadership Seminar January 22, 2002 Page 3

Part Two ‑ Preaching to Change Lives

John Ortberg

"The purpose of preaching is to help Christ be formed in people.

We are called to preach to change lives."

‑ John Ortberg

Constructing a Message

A. Start by developing the whole series

B. Clarify the big idea of the message

C. Research

D. Begin writing

E. Hack the baby down to size

F. Final review

G. Delivery

H. Evaluation

"Our goal is not to get people all the way through the Bible;

our goal is to get the Bible all the way through the people."

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CCN Leadership Seminar January 22, 2002 Page 4

Part Three ‑ Effective Delivery in a Visual World

Lon Allison

I. Intro

Gaining a hearing is not too difficult, it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

the hearing that is the challenge.

Why?

1. We are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in a visual oriented culture.

2. We are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with thousands of messages in the course of

a week.

3. We are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with other communicators in a media‑driven

world.

II. Preaching as Art

A. To get our all important message to be heard and remembered,

requires not

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who speak at people;

or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who speak to people;

but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who speak with people.

This is the era of the preacher‑artist Dr. Eddie Gibbs, Fuller

Theological Seminary

B. The artistic form most resembling preaching is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Some of

the techniques and skills of the actor can greatly enhance the

effectiveness of

the present‑world preacher.

III. The (Shape) of a Preacher

A. Think of the acronym \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. To get the body in shape

increases

health, and therefore effectiveness. Our goal is to get the preacher

into

communicating shape.

B. Every communicator/preacher has a God‑given preaching personality

. We

can discover the personality and nurture it. There are 6 key traits of

great

communication. Note: Few preachers possess all of these traits. Some

of the

very best have one or two and have honed them into excellent shape.

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C. Six traits of great communication/preaching in todays world:

1. S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑ The ability to make truth clear,

concise, and connected.

The apostle Paul prayed for this trait‑ that we may declare the

mystery of Christ, for which I am in

prison, so that I may declare it clearly, as I should

( - Colossians 4 - Colossians 4}: - 3 - Colossians

3}, - 4 - Colossians 4}).

Simplicity requires the right language.

Simplicity requires one big idea per message.

Simplicity requires transitions that make sense.

The use of stories, objects, movement, and use of space enhance

simplicity.

Remember, A mist in the pulpit will be a fog in the pew. (Haddon

Robinson).

2. H\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑ The ability to make listeners smile

and laugh.

Humor helps people cope with the seriousness and sadness of life.

Humor drives home ideas with subtle power.

Humor helps listeners take needed mental and emotional breaks during

the

message.

Humor gives the speaker affinity with the listeners and helps break

down the

authoritarian walls of the pulpit.

The most effective humor comes out of spontaneous moments. However,

appropriate jokes are also

helpful, as long as they are on the mark, and in no way degrading or

coarse ( - Eph. 5:4 - Ephesians 5:4}).

3. A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑The ability to speak sincerely to

1000 as if it was 1.

For we are not peddlers of Gods word like so many; but in Christ we

speak as persons of sincerity, as

persons sent from God and standing in his presence ( - 2 Cor.

2:17 - 2 Corinthians 2:17}).

Authenticity is probably the most compelling trait in preaching, for

it tells

the listener that the same word we bring to them is at work in us. Our

world

is not impressed by intelligence as much as by sincerity.

The first rule of acting helps here: It is you up there, you and no

one else‑

not a character, you. You never become someone else. Acting is placing

yourself into the play, adjusting for all the play tells you. (Jean

Shelton‑

Jean Shelton School of Acting)

4. P\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑The ability to communicate truth with

emotional commitment and a sense of urgency.

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The pulpit is the setting for drama. The preacher doesnt make the

gospel

dramatic, it already is. (R.C. Sproul)

Passion is not the same as volume. Passion has to do with

emotional intensity.

If the gospel matters, make sure your listeners know it. For many

preachers,

this requires a strong dose of courage.

5. E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑The ability to be appropriately

energetic in communicating.

Someone asked a great preacher what to do about sleeping

parishioners. His

response was, wake up the preacher.

This is good news after all. The trademark of Spirit‑filled

believers is hope. Hope translates to enthusiasm/energy in the

pulpit. Why should anyone else be enthused about your message if you

arent?

The amount of enthusiasm/energy is dependent upon:

‑The occasion

‑Size of the audience

‑Size of the room

6. S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑The ability to be open to the Spirit and

imaginative on your feet.

Spontaneity is possible when we believe the same God who led us in

the

study is with us on the platform.

Spontaneity is possible when the communicator realizes the audience

is

involved in the delivery and affects the speaker just as a

conversation with

one person affects the conversation.

Spontaneity is akin to acting on instinct.

Imagine a toy top

IV. Conclusion

The image of the space shuttle gives a good picture of the importance

of Delivery in the act of

preaching.

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Preaching the Messy Lives of the Bible - Ron Forseth

Preaching - Character Studies

- 2/2008.101

Preaching the Messy Lives of the Bible

Ron Forseth

General Editor, SermonCentral.com

In a recent "tour" through the Old Testament, I have repeatedly seen

that the featured people of the Bible have prominent dysfunction in

their lives. This is not the exceptionit's the norm! We talk about

"great lives" in the Bibleand there are many of thembut the thing

that amazes me is how many of those "great lives" were actually lived

by damaged people with serious family issues. Personally, I find this

trend somewhat comforting, not a justification for wrong‑doing or

unhealthiness, but at least a consoling depiction of the challenges we

humans face. I don't find myself alone as the only one dealing with

issues.

Consider the prevailing trend of "unhealth" among some of the Bible's

greats:

Adam, the first man, was a blame shifter who couldn't resist peer

pressure. ( - Genesis 3:12 - Genesis 3:12})

Eve, the first woman, couldn't control her appetite, and should we

say, had the first eating disorder? ( - Genesis 3:6 - Genesis

3:6})

Cain, the first born human being, murdered his brother.

( - Genesis 4:8 - Genesis 4:8})

Noah, the last righteous man on earth at the time, was a drunk who

slept in the nude. ( - Genesis 9:20‑21 - Genesis 9:20‑21})

Abraham, the forefather of faith, let other men walk off with his wife

on two different occasions. ( - Genesis 12 - Genesis 12} and

- 20 - Genesis 20})

Sarah, the most gorgeous woman by popular opinion, let her husband

sleep with another woman and then hated her for it.

( - Genesis 16 - Genesis 16})

Lot, who lost his father early in life, had a serious problem with

choosing the wrong company. ( - Genesis 18‑20 - Genesis 18‑20})

Job, supposedly a contemporary of Abraham and the epitome of faith,

suffered from the nagging of a faithless wife. ( - Job

2:9 - Job 2:9})

Isaac, who was nearly killed by his father, talked his wife into

concealing their marriage. ( - Genesis 26 - Genesis 26})

Rebekah, the first "mail order bride," turned out to be a rather

manipulative wife. ( - Genesis 27 - Genesis 27})

Jacob, who out‑wrestled God, was pretty much a pathological deceiver.

( - Genesis 25 - Genesis 25}, - 27 - Genesis 27},

- 30 - Genesis 30})

Rachel, who wrote the book on love at first sight, was a nomadic

kleptomaniac. ( - Genesis 31:19 - Genesis 31:19})

Reuben, the pride and firstborn of Jacob, was a pervert who slept with

his father's concubine. ( - Genesis 35:21 - Genesis 35:21})

Moses, the humblest man on the face of the earth ( - Numbers

12:13 - Numbers 12:13}), had a very serious problem with his temper.

( - Exodus 2 - Exodus 2}, - 32:19 - Exodus 32:19 -

- Numbers 20:11 - Numbers 20:11})

Aaron, who watched Jehovah triumph over Pharaoh, formed an abominable

idol during an apparent episode of attention deficit disorder or

perhaps colossal amnesia. ( - Exodus 32 - Exodus 32})

Miriam, the songwriter, had sibling jealousy and a greed for power.

( - Numbers 12 - Numbers 12})

Samson, who put Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jesse Ventura to shame, was

hopelessly enmeshed with a disloyal wifeand ended up taking his own

life. ( - Judges 16 - Judges 16})

Eli, who ruled over Israel, was a hopelessly incapable father who lost

his sons to immoralityand to an untimely death. ( - 1 Samuel

2 - 1 Samuel 2}, - 4 - 1 Samuel 4})

Saul, the first and powerful king of Israel, was apparently a

psychotic with manic bursts of anger, episodes of deep depression and

traces of paranoia, too. He committed suicide ( - 1 Samuel

16 - 1 Samuel 16}, - 18 - 1 Samuel 18}, - 19 - 1 Samuel

19}, - 31 - 1 Samuel 31})

David, the friend of God, concealed his adultery with a murder.

( - 2 Samuel 11 - 2 Samuel 11})

Solomon, the wisest man in the world, was arguably the world's

greatest sex addict with 1,000 sexual partners. ( - 1 Kings

11 - 1 Kings 11})

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With rare exception, all the kings that followed Solomon had mammoth

issues in their lives.

Hosea, an incredibly forgiving man, grappled with the pain of a wife

who could be described as a nymphomaniac.

The prophets, even as they spoke for God, struggled with impurity,

depression, unfaithful spouses, and broken families.

So what? Where's the edification in the list of warped examples?

Should we all just throw up our hands conceding that people are

typically a mess? Of course not. But there are some practical and

productive takeaways from these patterns of dysfunction in the Bible.

Here are some take aways:

1.God is unabashedly honest in his depiction of the human condition.

We can likewise grapple with authenticity and frankness. The

temptation to misrepresent ourselves and the pressure to put on a mask

causes further damage. The Gospel invites us to come into and live in

the light.

2. Dysfunction cannot be equated with our standing before God. Most

of those listed above can be characterized as righteousor at least

people of faith as we see in - Hebrews 11 - Hebrews 11}.

Whether it be we ourselves or those we shepherdit's not so much what

our issues areit's how we handle our issues. And even if our heart

condemns us, God is greater than our heart. ( - 1 John 3:20 - 1

John 3:20}) Paul spent his energy struggling against sin and left the

task of judging himself with God. ( - 1 Corinthians 4:3 - 1

Corinthians 4:3})

3. Sin does indeed have consequences. Pain, brokenness, loss, even

death, follow our bad choices. Hopefully our distaste for sin is

driven by our gratitude and love for God. But if for no other reason,

we should at least avoid it to escape the incredible pain that

accompanies it. ( - Galatians 6:7 - Galatians 6:7})

4. We do not have to feel alone in our sufferings. We've been given

a cloud of witnesses that can identify with how messy life can be. We

can take heart because we can get through our challenges and one day

be relieved of our striving against sin. ( - Hebrews

12:4 - Hebrews 12:4})

5. There is most certainly grace to be had. It's what the Gospel is

all about. No one can unscramble scrambled eggsexcept God. So let

us take our scrambled lives to God who understands and has mercy.

( - Hebrews 4:16 - Hebrews 4:16}) This is what redemption is

all about.

In light of the messy lives of the Bible, let me leave you with three

questions:

Does your church have a culture that allows for authentic openness

about messy lives?

Do you yourself sense the tender heart of God as you grapple with your

own issues?

What can you do today to model a healthy posture toward the messes we

face?

Ron Forseth is the General Editor of SermonCentral.com. He studied

for two years with Wycliffe Bible Translators' Summer Institute of

Linguistics and has a Master's degree in English from Colorado State

University. Ron has a passion for sharing Christ and to see all people

groups of the world reached with the Gospel. He served for several

years as a college pastor in Colorado and in Christian service for

most of the 1990s in China and Mongolia. He is also Vice President of

Outreach, Inc., an organization dedicated to inviting and connecting

every person in America to a Bible‑believing church so that they might

have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He lives with his

wife and two teenage children in Vista, California.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/article.asp?article=a‑Ron\_Forseth

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10 Ways to Keep Your Audience Awake

- 3/2008.101

Ten Ways to Keep Your Audience Awake

Section: Tricks, Tips, Problems, Fixes and Upgrades

Ten Ways to Keep Your Audience Awake

Nothing frightens a public speaker more than the prospect of the

audience # W falling asleep during the speech. Here are some things

you can do to prevent that from happening.

Don't Forget Your Purpose

Too many presentations ramble on and on with no clear sense of

purpose. The temptation is to throw in every clever quotation and

every interesting fact you can muster that is even remotely related to

the purpose of your presentation. The reason that this temptation is

so big is that you most likely havent identified what you hope to

accomplish with your presentation. In other words, you havent pinned

down your purpose.

Dont confuse a presentations title with its purpose. Suppose that

youre asked to give a presentation to a prospective client on the

advantages of your companys new, improved ChronoSimplastic

Infindibulator. Your purpose in this presentation is not to convey

information about the new Infindibulator, but to persuade the client

to buy one of the $65 million beasties. The title of your presentation

may be Infindibulators for the 90s, but the purpose is to convince

these saps to buy one, or maybe two.

Don't Become a Slave to Your Slides

PowerPoint makes such beautiful slides that the temptation is to let

them be the show. Thats a big mistake. You are the show, not the

slides. The slides are merely visual aids, designed to make your

presentation more effective, not to steal the show.

Its tempting to dim the lights, hide behind the lectern, and let your

slides do the talking for you. Keep the slides in their place.

Don't Overwhelm Your Audience With Unnecessary Detail

On November 19,1863, a crowd of 15,000 gathered in Gettysburg to hear

Edward Everett, one of the nations most eloquent orators, speak for

two hours about the events that had transpired during the famous

battle. When Everett finished, Abraham Lincoln rose to deliver a brief

two‑minute postscript that has since become the most famous speech in

American history.

If PowerPoint had been around in 1863, Everett probably would have

spoken for four hours. PowerPoint practically begs you to say too

much. After you get cranking on that outline, the bullets just fly,

one after the other. Pretty soon, you have 40 slides for a 20‑minute

presentation. Thats about 35 more than you probably need. Try to

shoot for one slide for every two to four minutes of your

presentation.

Don't Neglect Your Opening

As they say, you get only one opportunity to make a first impression.

Dont waste it by telling a joke that has nothing to do with your

presentation, apologizing for your lack of preparation, or listing

your credentials. Dont pussyfoot around; get right to the point.

The best openings are those that capture the audiences attention with

a provocative statement, a rhetorical question, or a compelling story.

A joke is OK, but only if it sets the stage for the subject of your

presentation.

Be Relevant

The objective of any presentation is to lead your audience to say, Me

too. Unfortunately, far too many presentations leave the audience

thinking, So what?

The key to being relevant is giving your audience what it needs, not

what you think is interesting or important. The most persuasive

presentations are the ones that present solutions to real problems

rather than opinions about contrived problems.

Don't Forget the Altar Call

Youve spent hours putting your presentation together. Dont forget to

ask for the order. Invite your audience to respond and show them how.

Make them an offer they cant refuse. Tell em your 800 number. Roll

the pen across the table. Give the altar call. (The buses will wait.)

Practice, Practice, Practice

Somehow a rumor got started that Abraham Lincoln hastily wrote the

Gettysburg Address on the train, just before pulling into Gettysburg.

In truth, Lincoln agonized over every word of the address.

Practice, practice, practice. Work through the rough spots. Polish the

opening and the altar call and all the awkward transitions in between.

Practice in front of a mirror or with a tape recorder. Time yourself.

Don't Panic

Dont worry! Be happy! Even the most gifted public speakers are scared

silly every time they step up to the podium. Whether youre speaking

to one person or ten thousand, relax. In 20 minutes, it will all be

over.

No matter how nervous you are, no one knows it except you. That is,

unless you tell them. The number‑one rule of panic avoidance is Never

apologize for your fears. Behind the podium, your knees may be

knocking hard enough to bruise yourself. But no one else knows. After

you swab down your armpits and wipe the drool off your chin, people

will say, Werent you nervous? You seemed so calm!

Expect the Unexpected

Expect things to go wrong because they will. The light bulb in the

overhead projector will burn out. The microphone wont work. Youll

drop your notes as you approach the podium. Who knows what else?

Above All Else, Don't Be Boring

An audience can overlook almost anything, but one thing they cannot

overlook is being bored. Above all, you must never bore your audience.

This guideline doesnt mean that you have to tell jokes, jump up and

down, or talk fast. Jokes, excessive jumping, and rapid speech can be

as boring as formatting disks. If you obey the other commandments if

you have a clear‑cut purpose and stick to it, avoid unnecessary

detail, and address real needs youll never be boring. Just be

yourself and have fun. If you have fun, so will your audience.<!‑‑[

\webpage{http://www.poweredtemplates.com/articles/tricks‑tips‑problems‑

fixes‑upgrades/ten\_ways\_to\_keep\_your\_audience\_awake/index.html

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Creating Readable Slides

- 3/2008.101

Creating Readable Slides

This article gives you a few random tips and pointers that help you

produce readable slides.

Try Reading the Slide front the Back of the Room

The number‑one rule of creating readable slides is that everyone in

the room should be able to read them. If youre not sure, theres one

sure way to find out: try it. Put the slide in the projector, walk to

the back of the room, and see whether you can read it. If you cant,

you have to make an adjustment.

Five Bullets, Tops

Ever notice that David Letterman uses two slides to display each of

his Top Ten lists? Daves producers know that ten items is too many

for one slide. Five is just right. Take a cue from Daves show and

limit yourself to no more than five bullet points per slide.

Avoid Small Text

If you cant read a slide from the back of the room, its probably

because the text is too small. The rule of thumb is that 24 points is

the smallest you should go for slides, and 18 points for overheads.

Twelve‑point type may be perfectly readable in a word processing

document, but it just doesnt cut it on an overhead or slide.

Avoid Excessive Verbiage Lending to Excessively Lengthy Text That Is

Not Only Redundant but Also Repetitive and Reiterative

This heading could have been Be Brief. Get the point?

Use Consistent Wording

Whenever possible, be consistent in the way you word your bulleted

lists. Consider this list:

<!‑‑[if !supportEmptyParas]‑‑> <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Profits will be

improved

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Expanding markets

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>We must reduce the

amount of overseas competition

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Production increase

<!‑‑[if !supportEmptyParas]‑‑> <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>

Each sentence uses a different grammatical construction. The same

points made with consistent wording have a more natural flow:

<!‑‑[if !supportEmptyParas]‑‑> <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Improved profits

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Expanded markets

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Reduced overseas

competition

<!‑‑[if !supportLists]‑‑>⋅ <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>Increased production

<!‑‑[if !supportEmptyParas]‑‑> <!‑‑[endif]‑‑>

See what I mean?

Stick to the Color Scheme

With all the professionally designed color schemes, theres no reason

to try to create your own. The color schemes combine colors that work

well together. Why spoil the party?

Stick to the Auto Layouts When You Can

You cant, at least not always. But try to if you can. The AutoLayouts

include various placeholder objects that are already lined up for best

readability.

Keep the Background Simple

Dont splash a bunch of distracting clip art on the background unless

it is essential. The purpose of the background is to provide a

well‑defined visual space for the slides content. Avoid templates

that have beach scenes in the background. For overheads, its best to

use light‑colored backgrounds. Dark backgrounds work well with slides.

Use Only Two Levels of Bullets

Sure, its tempting to develop your subpoints into sub‑subpoints and

sub‑sub‑subpoints, but no one can follow you. Dont make your slides

more confusing than they need to be. If you need to make

sub‑sub‑subpoints, you probably need a few more slides.

Keep Graphs Simple

Microsoft Graph can create elaborate graphs that even the best

statisticians will marvel at. But the most effective graphs are pie

charts with three or four slices and column charts with three or four

columns.

If you remember only one rule when creating your presentation,

remember this one: Keep it simple, clean, and concise.<!‑‑[

\webpage{http://www.poweredtemplates.com/articles/tricks‑tips‑problems‑

fixes‑upgrades/tips\_for\_creating\_readable\_slides/index.html

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The Art of Powerpointing: 10/20/30 Rule

The Art of Powerpointing: 10/20/30 Rule

Section: Before you use PowerPoint

The Art of Powerpointing: 10/20/30 Rule

The presentation cant be too short or too long. If it will be too

short, the speaker will not reveal the essence of the matter. If it

will be too long, the audience will get tired and will pass over the

very important information. Here is an optimal outline for the

content, length, and font of a good presentation:

‑ Ten slides

‑ Twenty minutes

‑ Thirty‑point‑font text

Ten slides

People always try to put on slides everything they know about the

topic of their presentation. This is typical mistake. You should

select key points only from the information youve found. Dont put

unessential information: it will divert attention from the key points

of your presentation. If the audience doesnt remember your

presentation, be prepared to repeat 90 percent of your information

once more.

Thus, the recommended number of slides for a presentation is ten. You

can add more, if it will be necessary. Behind these ten slides you can

put details, which will be (on your point of view) very necessary and

very interesting. If youre asked for a more in‑depth explanation, it

is nice to have these slides done in advance. In this way you should

foresee possible tricky questions and include them in the additional

slides. But you should never exceed twenty slides.

Try to concentrate on the absolute essentials.

Twenty minutes

Try to get through in twenty minutes. There are several reasons for

this. First, you will not be given more than twenty minutes if there

are other speakers.

Second, people usually keep concentration during 15‑20 minutes. After

this period the level of concentration starts decreasing very fast.

The information, which will be presented after twenty minutes period,

will be missed. It doesnt matter how your presentation will be

organized. Whether it will be presentation and then discussion or it

will be a sequence of presentation and discussion, presentation and

discussion, presentation and discussion; presentation should take up

twenty minutes.

Thirty‑point‑font text

It will be very difficult for the audience to read the text smaller

than fourteen points. If you have to use a small font to present your

information, it means that you are putting too much detail on the

slide. Each slide should contain one key point.

Use slides to lead, not read. They should paraphrase and enhance what

is speaker trying to say. Because people can read faster than you

talk, if you put too much detail on the slide, the audience will read

ahead of you and not listen to what youre saying.

Outline a few words about the topic you are going to present, and then

describe these few words in detail. This approach will be more

effective than putting everything you know on the slide.

Recommended reading

Guy Kawasaki. The art of the start: the time tested, battle‑hardened

guide for anyone starting anything. New York: Penguin Group, 2004

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oint/the\_art\_of\_powerpointing\_102030\_rule/index.html

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Common errors presenters make when choosing slide backgrounds

Section: Tricks, Tips, Problems, Fixes and Upgrades

Common errors presenters make when choosing slide backgrounds

Ever give much thought to the template youre using for your

PowerPoint presentations? You probably did when you created it, but

havent thought much about it since. You should, says Mr. Serge

Starenko, CEO of PoweredTemplates (www.PoweredTemplates.com). After

all, your slides background communicates almost as much about you and

your company as the information on the slides. Choosing a background

that does not reflect the mood of the company could easily compromise

the audiences opinion of the presenter, cautions Starenko. Here are

the most common errors Starenko sees presenters make when choosing

slide backgrounds, and what he suggests can be done to correct them.

1. Designing a background that doesnt fit your message.

In other words, dont select a background with classic cars when you

sell financial services. Dont laugh, says Starenko it happens all

the time. It is quite common for sales reps to select the design they

think is the coolest without taking into account the audience and the

purpose of the presentation, he explains. It is critical that

presenters select a design that communicates the overall mood of the

company and the products or services they sell. The rep selling

financial services, for example, would communicate the message more

effectively with a template that uses a graphical portrayal of money.

So how do you choose from the hundreds of custom slides out there with

that kind of image? Again, it comes back to your message and your

audience, says Starenko. Whats the message youre trying to get

across? Are you presenting to a group of high‑level executives from a

Fortune 500 company or to individual couples nearing retirement?

Approaching your search with your audience and presentation goals in

mind will help you quickly narrow your template search.

2. Selecting a design that does not match your companys existing

collateral materials.

If your company has branded its logo, brochures and Website in navy

blue and red, your template, if possible, should reflect that color

scheme, says Starenko. So if youve found several possible backgrounds

that reflect the mood of your presentation and you cant decide among

them, pick the one that best matches your companys colors. This kind

of cohesiveness will tie everything together for your audience.

3. Using more than one template in the same presentation.

Often, a sales rep will take slides from several previously‑designed

presentations and merge them into one new presentation. While the text

may be spot‑on, the look often comes across as a mishmash of slides

lacking cohesion, which ultimately undermines the message. Its fine

to slightly modify the background to make room for a large, important

chart, for example, by using a small strip of the main graphic along

the side. Ultimately, however, the background should have a consistent

look and feel throughout the presentation.

4. Sticking with standard PowerPoint backgrounds.

Granted, there is nothing really wrong with using one of the templates

included in the PowerPoint program, but you might unconsciously be

undermining the message by doing so. While using something basic such

as a standard template might be okay, says Starenko, usually

salespersons goal is to convey that they are better than okay, that

they are fabulous. Reps should use every tool available to

appropriately communicate that message. With so many striking

backgrounds available for a minimal price sometimes just $10 or so

Starenko points out that its just not worth taking the chance that

audience members will leave thinking been there, done that all for

the sake of saving a few bucks.

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fixes‑upgrades/common\_errors\_presenters\_make\_when\_choosing\_slide\_backgr

ounds/index.html

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The importance of PowerPoint Backgrounds/Templates in presentations

Section: Before you use PowerPoint

The importance of PowerPoint Backgrounds/Templates in presentations

As a designer of powerpoint templates/backgrounds, its important to

recognize that the majority of people do not have the expertise or

knowledge to effectively design their own powerpoint template. While

many people may be known as 'the expert in their field', it is

impossible for anyone to be an expert at everything. While some people

may do an adequate job laying out basic slides in the powerpoint

program, few have the experience or skill to create an effective

design that will appropriately represent their firm in an attractive

manner.

For presenters that believe they have a great sense of style, its also

important to realize that professional template designers are also

technically skilled in choosing images that are of the right

resolution and in creating the backgrounds/themes in a resolution that

is going to display appropriately. Designing backgrounds in a color

Palette that will enable the user to typeDate Originally Filed - isplay text clearly is also

extremely important.

In response to presenters, 'choosing the right template for their

presentation', if the goal of the presentation is to market or sell a

product or service, one must make the best use of every 'tool in their

toolbox' to ensure that their sales pitch will be at it's most

effective.

When choosing a template from the vast selection of quality products,

it's important to select the RIGHT design and not to choose something

because it looks 'cool' or because its your personal preference.

One must select a design that communicates the overall mood of the

company and the products/services they sell. For example, a company

doing a presentation on financial products, would achieve a much great

level of success in their presentation if they were to choose a

template that reflects the overall financial 'theme' of the company.

To elaborate and provide a more detailed example; a bank doing a

presentation on proven techniques to lower monthly expenses, should

choose a design that has a 'financial' feeling in contrast to choosing

a template that may be more geared towards the 'travel' industry or

something like that.

It is of major importance that the presenter look credible. Choosing a

background that does not reflect the mood of the company could easily

compromise the audiences opinion of the presenter.

On another note, a presenter should always select a theme that is in

the same color family as their companies existing collateral

materials. If the overall color scheme of all existing marketing

(logo, letterhead, brochures, etc) is navy blue and aqua, selecting a

template that is in that color family would provide a much better

overall impression. If a company is providing handouts of any kind,

having a cohesive presentation that matches those handouts in some way

will tie the whole thing together for the audience.

Mr. Serge Starenko,

CEO of PoweredTemplates

www.PoweredTemplates.com

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Tips for Bible Teachers/Preachers - Paul Dean - 4/2008.101

Monday, April 14, 2008

Crosswalk Pastors' Resources

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God is and God Has Spoken: Tips for Bible Teachers/Preachers

Paul Dean

Periodically I'm asked the question whether I believe the Sunday

morning sermon should be designed primarily to reach lost people or

teach Christians. That question is not illegitimate considering the

varying commitments in the contemporary church to being seeker

sensitive, emergent, or missional.

It is interesting that the question would essentially center on what I

believe rather than what is correct. Such is the influence of

postmodern relativism upon the way even believers think or talk. Of

course, it should not escape our attention that seeker sensitive or

emergent emphases flow from said influence.

Not surprising then is the myriad of tips doled out with regard to the

issue of preaching in the emerging church. The following example is

representative. 1) Connect with People's Feelings. 2) Be a Story

Teller. 3) Be a Situation Learning Catalyst. 4) Participate. 5) Be

Sacramental.

Two of the foundational tenets upon which life and indeed the church

are built are the actuality that God is and the reality that God has

spoken. Because God is and because He has spoken, it is His word that

is authoritative for our lives. Tips of the above sort flow from a

relativistic influence which flows from a loss of Scriptural authority

with its concomitant commitment to the aforementioned verities: God is

and God has spoken.

Thus, the answer to the question, "[Do you believe] the Sunday morning

sermon should be designed primarily to reach lost people or teach

Christians, as well as the answer to contemporary preaching tips is

the same: God is and God has spoken. Because these things are true,

the design of the sermon springs from the words God has spoken. We

refer to those words as the text [of Scripture]. The thrust of the

text will be the thrust of the sermon.

That does in fact mean that most of the time the primary emphasis in

the local assembly has to do with the saints. And, biblically, the

body gathers to worship and scatters to evangelize (or be missional).

At the same time, we recognize that lost people will be in the service

every Sunday. We must be mindful of that dynamic and preach the gospel

each week as well.

The balance is this: in one sense, the whole of the bible is the

gospel of Jesus Christ. If Christ is not the central theme of each

sermon, then we are not preaching Christ nor are we engaging in

Christian preaching. So, as the word of God itself is faithfully

proclaimed, Christ will be held out as our only hope whether the

hearers are saved or not; the gospel will be proclaimed throughout the

message; and the word will be applied in accordance with the intention

of the original authors. That's the only way to be faithful to what

truly is God's word.

Faithfulness to God and to His word really is the issue for only God's

word has the power to change lives ( - Rom. 1:16f - Romans

1:16}). A few preaching tips might be in order then, by way of

reminder, in light of the lofty truths that God is and He has spoken.

First, be an expository preacher. Whether you are preaching on a topic

or whether you are proceeding through a bible book verse by verse, as

noted, the text drives the sermon. There should always be explanation,

illustration, and application of the word of God to the people. Where

it is necessary to provide argumentation, that is, support for an

assertion, that element should be included as well.

Second, get into the habit of preaching through bible books. Such a

practice will enable you to get the flow of the author in context so

that God's word might be systematically brought to bear upon the lives

of the people. You may then break occasionally and preach timely

topical sermons or series.

Third, make sure you are an effective bible teacher. A preacher is a

herald of good news. But the news has content. Make it your goal to be

described as a bible teacher who is not afraid to herald the good news

of Christ in a passionate way. Make an unwavering commitment to sound

exegesis in the study but don't weary the people by being overly

technical. There are times when a Greek word or phrase must be

explained, for example, but avoid the practice of throwing Greek words

at the congregation. Exegesis is the foundation of the message that

will ultimately be delivered. What the people need is a message they

can understand, identify with, and apply. They need to be

intellectually challenged but not feel like they are in a seminary

classroom. They need to know how this message affects their lives on

Monday through Saturday.

Fourth strive for preaching that has broad appeal. You want your

preaching typically to appeal to intellectuals and non‑intellectuals

alike at different places in the message as you consistently and

constantly try to be aware of the entire audience. Don't be afraid to

address the young people with application relevant to them. But, rest

assured, their parents are interested in what is being said at that

point as well. You may address other groups in the same way.

Fifth, employ various elements of style in your preaching. God's

message to His people is a serious business. At the same time, don't

be afraid to use humor, for example, from time to time to make a

point. Story telling is certainly appropriate as long as the story

shines light on the truth of the text. The key is to bring light and

heat; truth and spirit; teaching and passion. The goal is to reach the

mind and the heart. These are not either/or propositions but both/and

propositions.

Sixth, fulfill your responsibility as a communicator. Aristotle talked

about the public speaker in terms of ethos or the speaker's integrity,

expertise, and knowledge; logos or the truth of the message and its

rational supporting arguments; and pathos or making a passionate

connection with the emotion or passion of the listener. In a biblical

and sanctified way, that is what you must attempt to do each and every

week. To use biblical terminology, your chief aim is to "preach the

word; be ready in season and out of season; convince, rebuke, and

exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching ( - 2 Tim. 4:2 - 2

Timothy 4:2}).

Preaching tips from the emerging church that do not focus on the words

of God should not be surprising. The movement has been influenced by a

postmodern relativism in the area of truth, a deconstruction in the

realm of meaning, an overreaction to some lamentable flaws in the

evangelical church, and a naturally resultant theological liberalism.

Those committed to the authority of Scripture will take a different

tack completely. While the above list is certainly not exhaustive, it

is decidedly foundational, as it is grounded in the reality that God

is and that God has spoken.

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101 Sermons In A Second - 6/2008.101

101 Sermons In A Second

Download 101 Sermons In A Second

101 SERMONS IN A SECOND: Using every day life situations and common

objects to keep central the message of Christ.

1. Activities: Choosing friends and activities Put food coloring

in cooking oil and mix in water. Let it stand for a few minuets.

Note how it separates. Sometimes there are reasons to put the

together for a while, but some things will just not stay together.

2CO 6:14

2. Anger/Temper: Baking soda and vinegar in balloon. Pour

backing soda and vinegar into a balloon. The expanding balloon

represents what happens to us when we get angry. COL 3:8

3. Anger: Can you pop a straw? Pinch both ends of a straw and

rotate the straw end over end causing the straw to wrap up on itself.

The center of the straw will form a bubble. Have someone flick the

end of the straw with their finger. If it is wound tight, it will pop

with little pressure. This illustrates what happens to all of us when

we get wound up to tight. The least little thing can make us POP!

PRO 29:11

4. Arguing/Yelling: Have you ever tried to argue in a whisper?

PRO 15:1

5. Auto Breaks: Brakes are used to slow down and stop a car.

What slows down and stops our bad behavior? PSA 119:11 If we have

memorized His Word, it will act like the brakes in a car when danger

pops in front of us.

6. Auto Bumper stickers. What bumper sticker do you like? Should

we have a bumper sticker on our car? What should it say?

7. Auto Gas fill up = Wouldnt it be nice to never have to put

gas in the car? Just like we have to keep our car full of gas, we

must keep our bodies full of food and our spirit filled with Him. JOH

6: 35

8. Auto Gas Gage: The gas gage on your car reminds us to keep the

tank full so we do not run out of gas and become stranded. What

reminds you to keep your spiritual tank full? Sunday Worship, Bible

studies, Family devotions. - Heb 10 - Hebrews 10 - 24‑25

9. Auto Windshield cleaning Sometimes windows get so dirty from

daily driving we cannot see clearly out of them, especially when it is

dark outside. To see the road clearly and be safe the windshield must

be washed. Sometimes our spiritual windshields need to be cleaned

too. Sin and attacks of Satan have stained the window and it is

always dark outside in this spiritual world. We clean our windshield

with confession to see the life ahead with the light of Gods Word.

ACT 28:26‑27

10. Braces: Make braces a reminder that the tongue needs a guard.

PRO 10:19; JAM 1:4. 1PE 3:10

11. Camp Fire: Putting new logs on a fire is like sinning. The more

you put on the faster and hotter it burns. If we stop putting logs on

the fire, it will go out. The same is true in our spiritual lives,

- 1Jo 3:9 - 1 John 3:9

12. Auto Paint Job My father used to always say, son, never buy a

paint Job meaning the paint on a car is not going to make it

mechanically sound. We have to be careful about some people who tell

us things that are just a paint Job meant to deceive us. 1JO

- 4:1 - Job 4:1

13. Children, New baby: Every time a new baby comes into this world

we are reminded that to go to Gods world we must be born again. JOH

3:3

14. Clothes. Usually designer label cloths cost more because they

are better made. It is nice to have the in thingas long as it stays

in style. We need spiritual designer cloths too that will never go

out of style. - Isa 61:10 - Isaiah 61:10

15. Cloths: New clothes = Robe of Righteousness Everyone needs new

cloths sometimes. Getting new cloths is really fun. Maybe we outgrow

the old ones or just wear them out or they get dirty. Nice new

physical clothes is not enough to live a happy life. Everyone needs

new spiritual clothes too - Rev. 3:17 - Revelation 3:17

16. Cloths: Weird dress; What can you tell about a person by the

way they dress? God looks at heart 1SA 16

17. Disability: Blind Person: How can a blind man tell if it is

light or dark outside: He feels the warmth of the light on his face.

All people should feel the warmth of His Light shining through us.

MAT 5:16

18. Eating Out: Restaurant is to worship service as home meals is to

devotions. At a restaurant ask how eating at a restaurant.

- Heb 10:24‑25 - Hebrews 10:24‑25

19. Electrical outlet: When you plug something into the wall outlet

you get the power to run the appliance. You cannot see the power but

you know it is there because the appliance worked, We have special

power too, just like the power plug. ACT 1:8

20. Email: If your child has an email site or a family email

address, send a message from God to themMaybe the days devotion or a

message you want them to learn.

21. Eye Glasses: Clean glasses: When your glasses get dirty they

have to be cleaned to see clearly. Sometimes we get things stuck in

the eye of our lives that cause us to see things differently than they

really are. They must be removed too. LUK 6:41‑42 "

22. Eye Glasses: sometimes children get glasses to improve their

school work but it does not help because it is not the core of the

problem. People can see clearly and still not understand. LUK 8:10

23. Fax: When a fax comes in, remind children that we get faxes

from God too in his Word.

24. Fire: It takes 2 logs to keep a fire going. True of friends

toogood or bad. - 1Co 15:23 - 1 Corinthians 15:23

25. Fireman: When we get in trouble and need to be helped, Jesus

will help us. HEB 7:25

26. Food‑ Hot salsa or anything that burns the tongue. Use this

experience to remind child of the reality and person of the Holy

Spirit in our lives. Sometimes we should be on fire with the Holy

Spirit. ACT 2:3‑4

27. Food‑ Salt; When adding salt to food explain that we are to act

like salt to the world. Discuss. COL 4:6 Let your conversation be

always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to

answer everyone.

28. Food: Boiling spaghetti that foams, pour in oil. Controlling

temper with Holy Spirit.

29. Food: Mix salt and pepper together. Try to separate out the

pepper again. Illustrates how we cannot easily separate ourselves

from the things and people of the world that harm us. 2CO 6:14‑17

30. Food: Mixing sugar in a drink is like saying kind things in a

sour situation. It sweetens it. It is equally hard to argue with

someone who insists on answering gently. On the other hand, a rising

voice and harsh words almost always trigger an angry response. To turn

away wrath and seek peace, choose gentle words.. - Pro

15:1‑2 - Proverbs 15:1‑2

31. Food: What is sweeter than honey? PSA 19:9‑10

32. Food: When boiling spaghetti wait until it is ready to foam over

and show the children. Tell them the boiling pot is like when they

get mad and are ready to boil over by saying mean things or doing bad

things. Pour a little oil in the pot and watch the foam disappear.

This is what happens when we pour the Holy Spirit into our problems.

We calm down.

33. Friends: Choosing friends and activities Put food coloring in

cooking oil and mix in water. Let it stand for a few minuets. Note

how it separates. Sometimes there are reasons to put the together for

a while, but some things will just not stay together. 2CO 6:14 Do

not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and

wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with

darkness?

34. Game: Crack the whip: With arms stretched out two people hold

hands . Begin to Rotate as fast as possible in a clockwise manner

with the inside person turning in a circle. Add one person to the end

at a time while the rotation continues. Soon the outside person is

running while the inside person is just standing in place. Lesson:

The further we are away from the center of Gods will, the faster we

will have to run to catch up.

35. Garden: Planting a seed: Why do we plant more seeds than we

need? MAR 4:15

36. Gift/unexpected: Ever get a gift you did not expect? Jesus

has many special gifts for us. One is a crown 2TI 4:8.

37. Grocery shopping list: Each week you make a grocery list of what

you are going to buy . Do you have a spiritual list and a plan for

daily devotions?:

38. Hair cut: In the Bible some people got a haircut because they

had sinned. If you got a haircut every time you sinned, how long

would your hair grow. Tell the story of Samson in - Judges

16 - Judges 16}. His haircut was breaking the vow of a Nazarite.

39. Hair style: Pride/Vanity Tell how Absaloms pride in his long

hair got him killed while trying to escape. His hair was just a

symbol of what was really going on in his heart. - 2Sa.

18 - 2 Samuel 18

40. Haircut #2 Some people got haircuts as a vow or promise to do

somethingCould you make a promise to do something every time you get

a haircut? Read how Paul made such a promise in - Acts

18 - Acts 18} This vow Paul took was probably a temporary Nazarite vow

that ended with shaving of the head and offering the hair as a

sacrifice ( - Num 6:18 - Numbers 6:18}).

41. Health: Annual or Sports Physical: We need to check our bodies

to make sure we are in good physical health. We need a regular

spiritual check up too. Signs of excellent spiritual health:

- Gal 5:22‑23 - Galatians 5:22‑23} 20

42. Health: Dr Appt. Well check: On the way to the Drs for a check

up remind the children we must keep a check on our physical health

too. We do that by going to church, family devotions etc.check

upHeb 10:24

43. House Cleaning: Cleaning under the refrigerator, washing

machine Even though you cant see it, Dust builds up under the

furniture and refrigerator and must be periodically cleaned. Sin

accumulates slowly under the furniture of our lives and must be

cleaned out too. etc. - Psa 90:8 - Psalms 90:8

44. Ice Capades: Did you ever notice how when the skaters form a line

and begin to spin in the circle the people away from the center have

to skate faster than the people in the center. Lesson: The further

you are from the center of the Word, the faster you have to run to

keep up

45. Illness: Dr. Visit for illness: Just like our physical bodies

get sick, our spiritual bodies get sick too. Sometimes we need to

visit the Great Physician in Prayer to get a prescription from His

Word to get the spiritual healing we healing we need. Symptoms showing

we need to see the Great Physician. GAL 5:19‑

46. Illness: Fever/taking your temperature: Normal Christian

Temperature: - Gal 5:22 - Galatians 5:22

47. Late for appointment Some things we can be late to with no

problem. There is one appointment we do not want to miss.

- Matthew 25:1‑13 - Matthew 25:1‑13

48. Lazy Susan Center 3 identical items on a Lazy Susan: one item

in the middle, one and one on the outside edge .. Spin the lazy

susan. If it is properly centered the center item will not fly off

and the outside item will fly off first. Lesson: the closer we are to

the center of His Word, the more stable and balanced we will be.

49. Letters: God sends us letters too! We can read them in His

Word. 1JO 2:1

50. License plate We keep license plates on a car so we can tell who

they belong to. Jesus does not need license plates. He already knows

us individually. JOH 10:14

51. Light bulbs: The brighter the bulb the hotter it feels. The

same is true of Christians. The Brighter we burn for Christ, the more

people feel the warmth of His Love through us. MAT 5:16

52. Liquid Wrench = Show your child a rusted bolt or tool. Explain

that sin has the same effect on our lives and it must be removed for

us to work properly. Spray the tool with liquid wrench and watch the

rust melt off. Gods Word does the same thing to our lives. It

removes the rust and stain of sin. Holy Spirit removes rust of sin

- John 15:3 - John 15:3

53. Lost Children: Rescue workers sometimes have trouble finding

lost children because they hide from them. They are afraid of

strangers or afraid they will get into trouble. When we know we are

lost, we must call out to be found. God is looking for all his

children too. Are you hiding or calling out? - Mark

10:14 - Mark 10:14

54. Lost Item. While looking for a lost item remind child of the

story of the lost sheep and lost coin. - Luke 15 - Luke

15}Are you Lost and God is looking for you. Will you let Him find

you?

55. Lying‑ JOH 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you

want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the

beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the

father of lies.

56. Magic: Sometimes what looks like a mystery is just a trick of

numbers: Confirm the Year of birth and age or anniversary and current

age from 0‑99

1. Double your age.

2. Add 5

3. Multiply by 50

4. Subtract 365

5. Add the 2 digit year you were born

6. Add 115

7. Total is your current age and year you were born

If you enter the right age and year it will show up as 5349 for 53

years old born in 1949.

57. Magic tricks, Sometimes it is fun to be fooled by slight of hand

magic tricks, but there is one who we should never be fooled by:

Satan. 2CO 11:3

58. Magicians - Acts 19 - Acts 19} tells of the seven sons

of Seva who tried to cast out demons with magic. It did not work and

the demon possessed man beat them all up. Magic does not work in the

real world, only Jesus does.

59. Mail: Priority Mail; For an older child or teen, send a message

via Priority Mail. Send a passage from the Word.

60. Mail: Send a letter; Write our a verse or passage you want your

child learn and Send it to them via the US Mail.. They love to get

stuff addressed to them

61. Naval Jelly = Holy Spirit removes rust of sin Show your child a

rusted bolt or tool. Explain that sin has the same effect on our

lives and it must be removed for us to work properly. Coat the tool

with navel jelly and watch the rust melt off. Gods word does the same

thing to our lives. It removes the rust and stain of sin. Holy

Spirit removes rust of sin - John 15:3 - John 15:3

62. Auto Oil change = Periodically the oil in our car gets dirty

and we have to change it. Sometimes our lives get dirty and we need

to make some changes too. The Bible says we should repent or to

change. We do that by asking forgiveness and changing our actions.

- 1Jo 1:9 - 1 John 1:9

63. Pam Cooking Spray: Just like Pam Cooking oil keeps food from

sticking to a pan, Jesus death on the cross keeps the penalty of sin

from sticking to us. - Rom 8:1 - Romans 8:1

64. Paying bills: When you are mailing bills, make a stamp or write

on the bill Jesus paid my debt in full ISA 53:6; HEB 10:14; JOH

19:30

65. Pet fish: Have you ever how excited your pets get when it is

time to be fed? They wait on us and are dependent on us for

everything. In the same way we are dependent on God. How excited do

we get when he gives us blessings? Phi 4:13

66. Pets: Pets have no worries because they depend on us to totally

take care of their every need. They often show their appreciation by

greeting us when we come home. We should be totally dependent on God

the way our pets are dependent on us. - 1Pe 5:7 - 1 Peter

5:7

67. Phone‑ Talking to much on the Telephone: PRO 10:19

68. Phone: No Answer on Phone: God is always there to hear our needs

and answer our prayers. HEB 7:25 .

69. Phone: Phone calls: Every time a phone rings it is a reminder

that God calls and want to talk to us too? Are we responding to His

call or is he getting a busy signal? JER 33:3

70. Phone‑Busy single on Phone: Isnt it great that we never get a

busy signal when we call on God. JER 29:12

71. Photo copy: Did you know you are like a photo copy? You are

becoming more like Jesus. - Rom 8:29 - Romans 8:29

72. Police car: Every time you hear a siren consider it a prayer

reminder. - 2Ch 7:14 - 2 Chronicles 7:14

73. Potpourri: When using air fresheners of any sort remind the

children that our lives are a type of air freshener to God. 2CO 2:15

74. Pride: Ever hear someone brag so much it makes you sick? PRO

25:27 PRO 25:

75. Referee: Overturning a Bad Call: When the video tape shows the

player was right, the play is overturned. Jesus overturns ALL our

fouls in Life and pays the penalty for them himself guaranteeing us

the victory. - Isa 54:1‑6 - Isaiah 54:1‑6

76. Referee: When you play any sport, you have to accept the fact

that the referees enforce the rules as they see them. Even if you

think they made a bad call, they still can enforce it. In life there

is ONE perfect referee who never makes a bad call. The Holy Spirit

calls the game according to rules. The rules of life are simple:

- Mat 5:48 - Matthew 5:48

77. Sack Lunch = Tell the story of what Jesus did with one little

boys sack lunch to feed 5000. - John 6 - John 6

78. Sack Lunch 2. When we are away from home for a while we will get

hungry so we take a sack lunch. One time the prophet Elijah was in

the wilderness and did not have any lunch. God sent his lunch to him

by Ravens. God also fed his spirit. - 1Ki 19 - 1 Kings 19

79. Sin: Why do people sin when they know it is bad for them? They

are Blinded by Satan and do not understand.. 2CO 4:4

80. Storage sheds: When putting things in a storage chest ask if

these things represent our true treasures. Take the treasure test

- Mat 6:33 - Matthew 6:33}.

81. Street light/Green: Praise the Lord for something He as done you

are grateful for.

82. Street light/Red: Make a game of red lights. They are now a

call to prayer. Pray at each green light.

83. Street lights Yellow: At Yellow street lights ask your child

what we are to slow down for? - Jam 1:19 - James 1:19

84. Street Lights/Yellow: Slow down, be ready to stop. What should

we be slow on? JAM 1:19

85. Street lights: Make each on mean something different. I.E.

Green Sing, Yellow recite a memory verse, Red pray.

86. Sun Glasses Sun glasses protect our eyes from the harmful rays

of the sun. Obedience protects our eyes in another way from another

enemy: What do you think the Bible means PRO 30:17 "The eye that

mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out

by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.

87. Sun glasses: Distort how things really look. Gods Word is

perfect reflection of world. 1CO 13:12

88. Teflon coating vrs. Black iron skillet. A skillet without teflon

coating will allow food to burn and stick to it. Teflon keeps the

food from sticking when the pan gets hot. Jesus death on the cross

covered us with a type of spiritual teflon so that the penalty of our

sins do not stick to us. - Rom 8:1 - Romans 8:1

89. Toothpicks (Fuzzy): Children can learn about Satans attacks at

a restaurant. Use the fuzzy toothpicks that hold a sandwich together

as darts. Ask the children what would happen if they shot these

toothpicks from a straw. Ask could someone get hurt? Explain Satan

is always shooting darts at all Gods children and we are protected by

our shield of faith. We cannot be harmed with our faith. EPH 6:16

90. Traffic / slow: Ever notice that people get really angry in slow

traffic. Isnt it a good thing that God does not get angry with His

children? Psa 245:8

91. Traffic/speeding: It is really easy to go fast with everyone

else but where are they really headed for in such a hurry? The Bible

says destruction. MAT 7:13‑14

92. Tree trimming: In order for plants and trees to grow strong they

must be trimmed back from all the things that would make them weak.

Jesus trims us of all the excesses too to make us strong in him. JOH

15:1‑2

93. Trouble: When in trouble and appeal is successfully made to mom

for help: : Jesus paid for our sin and pleads to Father for us. 1JO

2:1 .

94. Troubled times: Silver Polish = With your child polish some

tarnished silver with Silver Polish. Ask him if he thinks the silver

Likes to be polished? Explain that just like the silver tarnishes

from being in the world, we get tarnished too by sin. To remove the

tarnish from the silver you gently rub it with polish. Stubborn

tarnish requires some effort and produces heat. Sometimes God

polishes us by using hard times to remove some of the stains of sin

in our lives. That is good because when he is done, we look better

than new. - 1Pe 4 - 1 Peter 4} 12

95. TV Guide: What TV Guide do you use in your house most? The one

that comes in the Newspaper or mail or the one that is found in the

Word: - Psa 119:105 - Psalms 119:105

96. TV Remote: Set a biblical standard for viewing TV. Agree if

this is violated you will switch the channel. Let the kids have the

remote. If they dont switch the channel when the scripture is

violated. Someone else gets the remote. They must tell what standard

of God is being violated. PHI 4:8

97. Vacuum Secret sins. Usually children want to just vacuum the

center of the carpet and not the edges or under things. That will

show a big buildup after a time. That is like the secret sins in our

lives. Eventually it will show up and have to be dealt with.

- Psa 90:8 - Psalms 90:8

98. Visitors: Waiting for company. Tell the story of 5 wise and 5

foolish virgins from Math 25:1‑13. Since WE do not know when Jesus is

coming we must be always watching: MAT 25:13

99. Water bottle 2. When we dont drink we get really thirsty and

are in danger of getting sick. When we dont read our Bible or pray

we are in danger of getting sick too. We end up doing things we

should not do. - 1Th 5:19 - 1 Thessalonians 5:19

100. Water Bottle. It is important to keep our bodies filled

with water or we will get dehydrated and sick. We must constantly

take in water even when we do not feel thirsty. If you wait until you

feel thirsty you are already getting weakened by dehydration. The

same is true in our spiritual bodies. We must keep spiritually

hydrated.with Jesus. We do that by prayer and meditation

- Psa 119:11 - Psalms 119:11} & - 1Th 5:17 - 1

Thessalonians 5:17

101. Auto Windshield wipers: Windshield wipers on a car dont really

do muchuntil you need them. A sudden storm makes an overlooked item

on our car very important. Obedience to our parents or the Lord in

small things seems unnecessary until there is a storm in life, then we

need everything to be working perfectly.

Colossians 3:20

\webpage{http://immanuelmission.com/sermons.asp

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Risky Preaching

- 6/2008.101

Risky Preaching

55% of pastors can identify one or more topics on which they would not

preach at all or only sparingly, because the sermon could negatively

affect their hearers' willingness to attend church in the future.

Among them are politics (38%), homosexuality (23%), abortion (18%),

same‑sex marriage (17%), war (17%), women's role in church and home

(13%), the doctrine of election (13%), hell (7%) and money (3%).

Your Church 5/6/08

Church Leaders Intelligence Report 06/18/08

ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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Preaching to Learning Styles - Audio - Visual - Touch

- 11/2008.101

Learning Styles

Your Preferred Learning Style

A learning style is a way of learning. YOUR preferred learning style

is the way in which YOU learn best. Three learning styles that are

often identified in students are the Auditory Learning Style, the

Visual Learning Style, and the Tactile/Kinesthetic Learning Style.

Read about each of these learning styles to identify YOUR preferred

learning style.

Are you an Auditory Learner?

Auditory Learners learn best when information is presented in an

auditory language format. Do you seem to learn best in classes that

emphasize teacher lectures and class discussions? Does listening to

audio tapes help you learn better? Do you find yourself reading aloud

or talking things out to gain better understanding? If YES, you are

probably an Auditory Learner.

Are you a Visual Learner?

Visual Learners learn best when information is presented in a written

language format or in another visual format such as pictures or

diagrams. Do you do best in classes in which teachers do a lot of

writing at the chalkboard, provide clear handouts, and make extensive

use of an overhead projector? Do you try to remember information by

creating pictures in your mind? Do you take detailed written notes

from your textbooks and in class? If YES, you are probably a Visual

Learner.

Are you a Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner?

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners learn best in hands‑on learning settings

in which they can physically manipulate something in order to learn

about it. Do you learn best when you can move about and handle things?

Do you do well in classes in which there is a lab component? Do you

learn better when you have an actual object in your hands rather than

a picture of the object or a verbal or written description of it? If

YES, you are probably a Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner.

Your learning style is your strength. Go with it whenever you can.

When you can choose a class, try to choose one that draws heaviest on

your learning style. When you can choose a teacher, try to choose one

who's teaching method best matches your learning style. When you

choose a major and future career, keep your learning style firmly in

mind.

If you publish or distribute any of the materials from this site,

please give credit to www.how‑to‑study.com.

\webpage{http://www.how‑to‑study.com/LearningStyles.htm

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What Is Your Biggest Fear ‑ Speaking, Rejection or Failing?

- 11/2008.101

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST FEAR ‑ SPEAKING, REJECTION OR FAILING?

It is said that speaking in public is a bigger fear than death. I

don't buy it. I think if someone put a gun to your head and said speak

in public or die ‑‑ you'd find that lost William Jennings Bryan

oration within you.

By far the biggest fear of salespeople is fear of failure. It has a

cousin ‑‑ fear of rejection. Rejection is the pathway to failure ‑‑ if

you fear it. While failure itself is real, the fear of it is a

condition of the mind.

Earl Nightingale's legendary tape "The Strangest Secret" says, "You

become what you think about." If that's true, why doesn't everyone

think "success?" The answer is a combination of what we expose

ourselves to, and how we condition ourselves.

We live in a world of negative conditioning. The three big motivators

are fear, greed and vanity. They drive the American sales process ‑‑

and they drive the American salesperson.

Our society preys on the fear factor. It's in 50% of the ads we see

(the rest are greed or vanity). Ads about life insurance for death and

disability, credit cards stolen, anti‑freeze for stalled cars, tires

that grip the road in the rain, brakes that stop to avoid hitting a

child on a bike, and security systems so your home won't be robbed.

You see that crap enough, you become "fear‑conditioned."

We are constantly reminded to carry mace, get a burglar alarm, and be

sure we have The Club. To make matters worse we now see police at ATM

machines, metal detectors in schools, and can rely on the local news

to promulgate the trend. They are dedicated to promote issues of fear

every minute they're on the air.

Once society gives you fear, it's natural that you take it with you

into the workplace. It transmutes into a fear of failure. This fear

intensifies in workplaces with hostile environments. Bosses and

managers who threaten, intimidate and ridicule.

In the midst of this we struggle for success. And while we think we

fear failure, or at least don't want it around us ‑‑ we all face it in

one form or another every day. Everyone fails. But, failure is

relative. Its measurement is subjective. Mostly it occurs in your

mind. If you exchange "I failed" for "I learned what never to do

again," it's a completely different mindset. The status of failure is

up to you.

Over the years of my failures, I have developed a great way of looking

at it (lots of practice). I learn from it, or I ignore it.

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Thomas Edison ‑ failed 6,000 times before the light bulb, Donald Trump

had monumental failures on his way to the top, Mike Schmidt ‑ third

baseman for the Philadelphia Phillies, failed at the plate (at bat)

two out of three times for 20 years, and was inducted into baseballs

hall of fame as one of the greatest ball players of all time. Were

these men failures? Did they fear failure?

There are degrees of failure in sales. Here are some external ones:

Failure to prepare

Failure to make contacts

Failure to make a sale

Failure to meet a quota

Failure to keep a job

External (outside) fears, lead to internal (inside) fears ‑‑ fear

based on what happens when you fail or are close to failing. Your

reaction to internal fear determines your fate. It's not what happens

to you, it's what you do with what happens to you. Here are the five

typical reactions to rejection or failure:

1. Curse it.

2. Deny it (a nice way of saying lie about it).

3. Avoid it.

4. Make an excuse about it.

5. Blame others (the easiest thing to do).

6. Quit.

Failure actually only occurs when you decide to quit. You choose your

results. Here are a few simple things you can do to avoid getting to

the "quit" stage:

Look at failure is an event not a person.

Look for the why, and find the solution (If you look at "no" hard

enough, it will lead you to yes).

List possible opportunities.

Ask yourself what have I learned, and try again.

Don't mope around with other failures ‑‑ go find a successful

person, and hang around him.

Here are a few complicated things you can do to avoid getting to the

"I quit" stage:

Create a new environment.

Cultivate new associations.

Access new information.

Get a new mind set ‑‑ create new background thoughts.

It's always too soon to quit.

Afraid to speak, or afraid to fail? Which is the greater fear? When

you consider the complications and ramifications of failure, making a

speech to 1,000 people, by comparison, is a walk in the park.

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Sales Bible, Knock Your Socks off

Selling and Customer Satisfaction is Worthless Customer Loyalty is

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Advice For The Preacher ‑ Ultimate Preaching Rules

Advice For The Preacher

- 11/2008.101

Advice For The Preacher ‑ Ultimate Preaching Rules:

According to your congregation, there are bad sermons and short

sermons but there are no bad short sermons.

A life saver mint will last 22 minutes exactly if left laying between

the cheek and gum during the normal course of talking. This is a

helpful hint to time your sermon. Just don't make the mistake of

putting a button in your mouth instead of a life saver before you get

up to preach.

It never fails that when an "Awesome Sermon" is preached, members of

the congregation cannot remember the scripture citations or what the

sermon was about when the service is over.

When you reach a weak point in the sermon, raise the pitch and volume

of your voice to compensate.

Have the congregation stand for the last hymn before the message, to

assure everyone starts out awake.

The purpose of a great sermon is to comfort the afflicted and afflict

the comfortable. The latter is preferable to the former.

No matter how hard you have studied and prayed, some sermons seem to

barely get out of your mouth before they drop on the floor in front of

the first pew.

When the congregation starts to lose interest and doze off you can

awaken them by saying loudly, "And Finally" or "In Conclusion." This

will only work about four times per sermon.

Have a good opening point. Have a good closing point. Keep the two as

close together as possible.

10. Take advice from the rooster. One day, a hen expressed the

ultimate ambition of her life, which was to lay an egg in the middle

of a busy expressway. So the rooster took her there. When they got to

the edge of the road, and traffic was whizzing by, the rooster gave

her this advice: "All right now! Make it quick, and lay it on the

line!"

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Preaching Like Jesus ‑ Rick Warren - 1/2009.101

Preaching Like Jesus ‑ Rick Warren

A Primer on Preaching Like Jesus, Part One

By Rick Warren

Pastors.com

CBN.com ‑ Jesus preaching attracted enormous crowds, and the Bible

often records the positive reactions of those crowds to his teaching.

- Matthew 7:28 - Matthew 7:28} the crowds were amazed at his

teaching.

- Matthew 22:33 (TLB) - Matthew 22:33 TLB} the crowds were

profoundly impressed.

- Mark 11:18 (TLB) - Mark 11:18 TLB} ‑ people were so

enthusiastic about Jesus' teaching.

- Mark 12:37 (NASB) - Mark 12:37 NASB} ‑ The great crowd

enjoyed listening to Him.

These crowds had never heard anyone speak to them the way Jesus did.

They were spellbound by his delivery.

To capture the attention of unbelievers like Jesus did, we must

communicate spiritual truth the way he did. I believe that Jesus ‑ not

anyone else ‑ must be our model for preaching. Unfortunately, some

homiletics classes pay more attention to Aristotle and Greek rhetoric

than to how Jesus taught.

In - John 12:49 - John 12:49} Jesus admitted, The Father who

sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. Notice that both

the content AND the delivery style were directed by the Father. This

is extremely important to note. We often overlook the manner in which

Jesus preached.

Theres so much we can learn from Jesus style of communication, not

just his content. But for now I want to briefly identify three

attributes of Jesus preaching.

1. Jesus Began With Peoples Needs, Hurts, and Interests

Jesus usually taught in response to a question or a pressing problem

from someone in the Crowd. He scratched where people itched. His

preaching had immediacy about it. He was always relevant and always on

target for that moment.

When Jesus preached his first sermon at Nazareth, he read from Isaiah

to announce what the preaching agenda of his ministry would be: "The

Lord has put his Spirit in me, because he appointed me to tell the

Good News to the poor. He has sent me to tell the captives they are

free and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to

free those who have been treated unfairly and to announce the time

when the Lord will show his kindness" ( - Luke 4:18‑19

NCV) - Luke 4:18‑19 NCV}.

Notice his entire emphasis on meeting needs and healing hurts. Jesus

had Good News to share, and people wanted to hear it. He had a message

that offered practical benefits for their lives. His truth would set

people free and bring all sorts of blessings to their lives.

Our basic message to the lost must be good news. If it isnt good news,

it isnt the gospel. We must learn to share the gospel in ways that

show it is both good and news. The gospel is about what God has done

for us and what we can become in Christ. A personal relationship to

Christ is the answer to all of mans deepest needs. The good news

offers lost people what they are frantically searching for:

forgiveness, freedom, security, purpose, love, acceptance, and

strength. It settles our past, assures our future, and gives meaning

to today. We have the best news in the world.

Crowds always flock to Good News. These days, particularly after

September 11th, there is plenty of bad news in the world. The last

thing people need to hear is more bad news in church. Theyre looking

for hope and help and encouragement. Jesus understood this. Thats why

he felt so compassionate toward them. He knew that the crowds were

harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

By beginning with peoples needs when you preach, you immediately gain

the attention of your audience. Practically every communicator

understands and uses this principle except pastors!

Wise teachers know to start with the students interests and move them

toward the lesson. Effective salesmen know you always start with the

customer, not the product. Smart managers know to begin with the

employees complaint, not their own agenda. You start where people are

and move them to where you want them to be.

Pick up any textbook on the brain and youll learn that at the base of

your brain stem is a filter called the Reticular Activating System.

God graciously put this filter in our minds so we dont have to

consciously respond to the millions of stimuli that were bombarded

with on a daily basis. It continuously sifts and sorts the things you

see, hear, and smell‑‑forwarding only a few of those stimuli on to

your consciousness. This way youre not overloaded and overwhelmed. If

you had to consciously respond to every stimuli your senses pick up,

youd go crazy! Your Reticular Activating System determines what gets

your attention.

Now, what does get peoples attention? Three things always make it past

your reticular activating system: things you value; things that are

unique; and things that threaten you. This has profound implications

for the way pastors preach and teach. If you want to capture the

attention of an uninterested group of people you must tie your message

to one of these three attention‑getters.

While sharing the Good News in a unique or threatening way can get

attention of unbelievers, I believe showing its value to people is

most consistent with how Christ taught. Jesus taught in a way that

people understood the value and benefit of what he was saying. He

didnt try to threaten unbelievers into the kingdom of God. In fact,

his only threats were to religious people! As the clich goes, he

comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable.

Because preachers are called to communicate truth, we often mistakenly

assume that unbelievers are eager to hear the truth. They arent!

Unbelievers arent that interested in truth these days. In fact,

surveys show that the majority of Americans reject the idea of

absolute truth.

This is the source of all the problems in our society. People dont

value truth. Today people value tolerance more than truth. People

complain about crime, drug abuse, the breakup of the family, and other

problems of our culture, but they dont realize the cause of it all is

their rejection of truth.

Moral relativism is the root of what is wrong in our society. But it

is a big mistake for us to think that unbelievers will race to church

if we just proclaim, We have the truth!

Their reaction will more likely be, Yeah, so does everybody else!

Proclaimers of truth dont get much attention in a society that

devalues truth. To overcome this, some preachers try to Yell it like

it is. But preaching louder isnt the solution to this apathy. It

starts by being wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

While most unbelievers arent looking for truth, they are looking for

relief. This gives us the opportunity to interest them in truth. Ive

found that when I teach the truth that relieves their pain or solves

their problem, unbelievers say, Thanks! What else is true in that

book? Sharing biblical principles that meet a need creates a hunger

for more truth.

Jesus understood this. Very few of the people who came to Jesus were

looking for truth. They were looking for relief. So Jesus would meet

their felt needs, whether leprosy, blindness, or a bent back. After

their felt needs were met, they were always anxious to know the truth

about this man. He had helped them with a problem they couldnt solve.

- Ephesians 4:29 - Ephesians 4:29} says, ...[speak] only what

is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it

may benefit those who listen. Notice that who we are speaking to

determines what we are to say (this has nothing to do with

compromising the message and everything to do with understanding the

needs of your listeners). The needs of those listening decide the

content of our message. We are to speak ONLY what benefits those we

are speaking to. If this is Gods will for our conversations, it must

also be Gods will for our sermons.

Unfortunately, it seems that many pastors determine the content of

their messages by what they feel they need to say rather than what the

people need to hear.

One reason sermon study is so difficult for many pastors is because

they ask the wrong question. Instead of asking What shall I preach on

this Sunday? they should instead ask, To whom will I be preaching?

Simply thinking through the needs of the audience will help determine

Gods will for the message.

Since God, in his foreknowledge, already knows who will be attending

your services next Sunday, why would he give you a message totally

irrelevant to the needs of those he is intending to bring? Why would

he have me preach on something unhelpful to those hes planned to hear

it? I believe that peoples immediate needs are a key to where God

would have me begin speaking at that particular occasion.

What Im trying to say is this: The crowd does not determine whether or

not you speak the truth. The truth is not optional. But your audience

does determine which truths you choose to speak about. To unbelievers,

some truths are more relevant than others.

Can something be both true and irrelevant? Certainly!

If youd been in a car accident and were bleeding to death in the

Emergency Room, how would you feel if the doctor came in and wanted to

talk about the Greek word for hospital or the history of the

stethoscope? All he said to you could be true but irrelevant because

it doesnt stop your hurt. You would want the doctor to begin with your

pain.

Your audience also determines how you start your message. If you are

speaking to the unchurched ‑ and you spend the first part of the

message on historical background ‑ by the time you get to the personal

application youll have already lost your audience. When speaking to

the unbelievers, you need to begin where your sermons normally end up!

Today preaching to felt needs is scorned and criticized in some

circles as a cheapening of the gospel and a sell‑out to consumerism. I

want to state this in the clearest way possible: Beginning a message

with peoples felt needs is not some modern approach invented by 20th

century marketing! Its the way Jesus always preached.

Its based on the theological fact that God chooses to reveal himself

to man according to our needs! Both the Old and New Testament are

filled with many examples of this.

Even the names of God are revelations of how God meets our felt needs!

Throughout history when people have asked God, What is your name? Gods

response has been to reveal himself according to what they needed at

that specific time:

those who needed a miracle, God revealed himself as Jehovah‑Jireh ("I

am your provider")

to those who needed comfort, God revealed himself as Jehovah‑Shalom

("I am your peace")

to those who needed salvation, God revealed himself as

Jehovah‑tsidkenu ("I am your righteousness").

The examples go on and on. God always meets us where were at ‑ our

point of need. Preaching to felt needs is a theologically sound

approach to introducing people to God.

Preaching that changes lives somehow brings the truth of Gods Word and

the real needs of people together through application. Which end of

the continuum you begin with is irrelevant as long as you bring them

together!

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#2

A Primer on Preaching Like Jesus, Part Two

By Rick Warren

Pastors.com

CBN.com ‑ 2. Jesus Related Truth to Life

I love the practicality and simplicity of Jesus teaching. It was

clear, relevant, and applicable. He aimed for application because his

goal was to transform people, not merely inform them.

Consider the greatest sermon ever preached, The Sermon on the Mount:

Jesus began by sharing eight secrets of genuine happiness;

Then he talked about living an exemplary lifestyle, controlling anger,

restoring relationships, and the issues of adultery and divorce.

Next he spoke of keeping promises and returning good for evil.

Then Jesus moved on to other practical life issues like how to give

with the right attitude, how to pray, how to store up treasure in

heaven, and how to overcome worry.

He wraps up his message by telling us to not judge others, encouraging

persistence when asking God to meet our needs, and warning us about

false teachers.

Finally, he concludes with a simple story that emphasizes the

importance of acting on what hes taught: Put into practice what youve

just learned!

This is the kind of preaching that we need in churches today. It

changes lives! Its not enough to simply proclaim, Christ is the

Answer. We must show the unchurched how Christ is the Answer. Sermons

that exhort people to change without sharing the practical steps of

how to change only produce more guilt and frustration.

A lot of preaching today is what I call, Aint it awful! preaching. It

just complains about our society and makes judgments about people in

general. Its long on diagnosis and short on remedy. It makes

Christians feel superior to those out there but it rarely changes

anything. Instead of lighting a candle, it just curses the darkness.

When I go to a doctor, I dont want to just hear whats wrong with me, I

want him to give me some specific steps to getting better. What people

need today is less ought‑to sermons and more how‑to sermons.

Exhortation without explanation leads to frustration.

Some pastors today criticize life‑application preaching as shallow,

simplistic, and inferior. To them the only real preaching is didactic,

doctrinal preaching. Their attitude implies that Paul was more

profound than Jesus; that Romans is deeper material than the Sermon on

the Mount or the Parables. I call that heresy!

The deepest kind of teaching is that which makes a difference in

peoples day‑to‑day lives. As D.L. Moody once said, The Bible was not

given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives. The goal is

Christ‑like character.

Jesus said, I have come that you might have life. He didnt say, Ive

come that you might have religion. Christianity is a life, not a

religion, and Jesus was a life‑application preacher. When he finished

his teaching to the Crowd he always wanted them to go and do likewise.

Christ‑like preaching explains life to people. It produces a changed

lifestyle. Life‑related preaching doesnt just inform, it transforms.

It changes people because the Word is applied to where people actually

live. Sermons that teach people how to live will never lack an

audience.

Please understand this: The unchurched are not asking that we change

the message or even dilute it, only that we show its relevance. Their

big question is So what? They want to know What difference does it

make? Ive found that unchurched Americans are intensely interested in

Bible doctrine when it is applied in practical and relevant ways to

their lives.

I love to teach theology to the unchurched without telling them its

theology and without using theological terms. I find it challenging

and enjoyable. Ive preached sermon series to the unchurched on the

incarnation, justification, and sanctification without ever using the

terms! I did a series on the moral attributes of God and simply called

it Getting to Know God. Ive preached sermons to seekers on

stewardship, the work of the Holy Spirit, and even the Seven Deadly

Sins.

Its a myth that you must compromise the message to draw a crowd. Jesus

certainly didnt. You dont have to transform the message, but you do

have to translate it.

3. Jesus Spoke to the Crowd with an Interesting Style

The crowd loved to listen to Jesus. - Mark 12:37 (NCV) - Mark

12:37 NCV} says, The large crowd listened to Jesus with pleasure. The

New International Version says they listened with delight.

Do people delight in your messages? Jesus never tried to convert

anyone with anger.

Some pastors actually think they have failed in their preaching if

people enjoy a message. Ive heard pastors say proudly, Were not here

to entertain. In a Gallup poll a few years ago, the unchurched listed

the church as the most boring place to be.

If you look up the word entertain in a dictionary, youll find this

definition: capturing and holding the attention for an extended period

of time. I dont know any preacher who doesnt want to do that! We

shouldnt be afraid of being interesting. A sermon doesnt have to be

dry to be spiritual.

To the unchurched, dull preaching is unforgivable. Truth poorly

delivered is ignored. On the other hand, the unchurched will listen to

absolute foolishness if it is interesting. To prove this just turn on

your television late at night and see the assortment of psychics,

wackos, and weirdoes that dominate the airwaves.

It never ceases to amaze to me how some Bible teachers are able to

take the most exciting book in the world and bore people to tears with

it. I believe it is a sin to bore people with the Bible.

The problem is this: When I teach Gods Word in an uninteresting way,

people dont just think Im boring, they think God is boring! We slander

Gods character if we preach with an uninspiring style or tone. The

message is too important to share it with a take‑it‑or‑leave it

attitude.

Jesus captured the interest of large crowds with techniques that you

and I can use:

He told stories to make a point. Jesus was the master storyteller.

He'd say, "Hey, did you hear the one about..." and then tell a parable

to teach a truth. In fact, the Bible shows that storytelling was Jesus

favorite technique when speaking to the crowd. Jesus spoke all these

things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them

without using a parable." ( - Matt. 13:34 - Matthew 13:34})

Somehow preachers forget that the Bible is essentially a book of

stories! Thats how God has chosen to communicate his Word to human

beings.

There are many benefits to using stories to communicate spiritual

truth: Stories hold our attention. The reason television is so popular

is because its essentially a story‑telling device, whether youre

watching comedy, drama, the news, or a talk show. Even the commercials

are stories. Stories stir our emotions. They impact us in ways that

precepts and propositions never do.If you want to change lives, you

must craft the message for impact, not for information. Stories help

us remember. Long after a pastors cute outline is forgotten, people

will remember the stories of the sermon.

Its fascinating, and sometimes comical; to watch how quickly a crowd

tunes in whenever a speaker begins telling a story and how quickly

that attention vanishes as soon as the story is finished!

Jesus used simple language. He didnt use technical or theological

jargon. He spoke in simple terms that normal people could understand.

We need to remember that Jesus did not use the classical Greek

language of the scholar. He spoke in Aramaic. He used the street

language of that day and talked of birds, flowers, lost coins, and

other everyday objects that anyone could relate to.

Jesus taught profound truths in simple ways. Today, we do the

opposite. We teach simple truths in profound ways. Sometimes when

pastors think they are being deep they are really just being muddy.

Today some pastors like to show‑off their knowledge by using Greek

words and academic terms in their preaching. They speak in an unknown

tongue without being charismatic! Pastors need to realize that no one

cares as much about the Greek as they do. Chuck Swindoll once told me

that he believes an overuse of word studies in preaching discourages

confidence in the English text. I agree.

In fact, Chuck and I ‑ along with Jack Hayford and Chuck Smith ‑ once

taught a seminary course on preaching. We each taught how we prepare

and deliver sermons. At the end of the course, the students mentioned

that all four of us had, without collaboration, emphasized the same

thing: keep it simple!

Its easy to complicate the gospel, and of course, Satan would love for

us to do just that. The apostle Paul worried that your minds would be

led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ

( - 2 Cor. 11:3 NASB) - 2 Corinthians 11:3 NASB}.

It takes a lot of thought and preparation to communicate profound

truths in simple ways. Einstein once said, You dont really understand

something unless you can communicate it in a simple way. You can be

brilliant, but if you can share it in a simple way, your insights

arent worth much.

The Saddleback Valley is one of the most highly educated communities

in America, yet I find that the simpler I make the message, the more

God blesses it.

Simple does not mean shallow. Simple does not mean simplistic. Simple

means being clear and understandable. For instance, This is the day

the Lord has made is simple while, Have a nice day! is simplistic.

Most people today communicate with a vocabulary of less than 2,000

words and rely on only about 900 words in daily use. If you want to

communicate with most people, you need to keep it simple. Never allow

yourself to be intimidated by people who think they are intellectuals.

Its been my observation that people who have to use big words are

sometimes hiding bigger insecurities.

I believe simple sermon outlines are always the strongest outlines. I

consider being called a simple preacher a compliment. Im interested in

seeing lives changed, not in impressing people with my erudition.

Id rather be clear than complex.

Jesus ‑ not anyone else ‑ must be our model. When we preach like he

did, well see the results he did.

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Topical Preaching Can Be Truly Biblical Don Sunukjian

- 1/2009.101

Topical Preaching Can Be Truly Biblical Don Sunukjian

To be biblical, a topical sermon must base its main points on texts

that share the same purpose.

An Article by Donald Sunukjian

\webpage{http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/toprcanbetrb.html

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Topical preaching that is truly biblical is:

‑the communication of a biblical concept,

‑derived from several different passages related to one another

1.through a common subject

2.and through either parallel or progressive assertions about that

subject.

Let's unpack each of these bullets.

First, a topical message, as all good preaching, attempts to

communicate a single ideaone central truth, one dominant sentence

that expresses the sermon in a nutshell.

Second, this central truth is formed from several different passages,

each of which genuinely addresses the same specific subject.

It is at this point that many topical messages go biblically astray,

as the preacher makes a passage speak about a subject other than the

one intended by the biblical writer.

For example, a preacher who delivers a message on "How to Parent

Teenagers" might be tempted to include - James 1:19 - James

1:19} among his main points: "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and

slow to become angry."

But James is not talking about parenting teenagers. Instead, his flow

of thought through - chapter 1 - James 1} is:

‑If we persevere under a trial, we will gain maturity and reward

(1:1‑12).

‑If we sin because of the stress of the trial, it is not because God

has pushed us too farGod is too good to do thatbut because of evil

desires within us (1:13‑18).

‑Instead of blaming God for our sinan attitude that will never bring

the righteous life God desireswe should instead be quick to listen to

the Word, slow to speak our alibis, and slow to become angry against

God (1:19‑25).

The danger in topical preaching is we may short‑cut the exegesis of a

passage, fail to get the true point of the biblical author, and

instead attach his words to a topic far different from what he had in

mind.

In a sermon on "A Man after God's Own Heart" ( - 1 Samuel

13:14 - 1 Samuel 13:14}) the preacher might be tempted to highlight

David's

I. Fearless Trust ( - 1 Samuel 17 - 1 Samuel 17})

II. Generous Devotion ( - 1 Chronicles 29 - 1 Chronicles 29})

III. Genuine Confession ( - Psalm 51 - Psalms 51})

But none of these passages is intended by the biblical author to

explain what made David a man after God's own heart. The selection is

purely arbitrary on the part of the preacher, who could have just as

inappropriately listed David's "Skillful Songwriting," and thus

eliminated most of us from ever qualifying as a person after God's

heart.

Instead, the context of - 1 Samuel 13‑15 - 1 Samuel 13‑15

clearly shows which of David's traits the biblical author has in mind.

David, in contrast to Saul, will "keep the Lord's command"; he will

obey everything God says ( - 13:14 - 1 Samuel 13:14 -

- 15:19‑27 - 1 Samuel 15:19‑27 - - Acts 13:22 - Acts

13:22}). This unswerving obedience, and not any of the factors above,

is what made David a man after God's own heart.

Biographical sermons are especially vulnerable to this abuse of using

verses to establish points unintended by the biblical author. For

example, a sermon on "What Are the Marks of a Spirit‑Filled Man?"

based on the life of Philip ( - Acts 6:3‑5 - Acts 6:3‑5}),

would certainly be suspect if its main points were

I. A Spirit‑filled man will leave a successful ministry and labor

unknown in a desolate region ( - Acts 8:4‑8 - Acts 8:4‑8},

- 26‑40 - Acts 8:26‑40}).

II. A Spirit‑filled man will channel his daughters into celibate

ministries ( - Acts 21:8‑9 - Acts 21:8‑9}).

There is no suggestion in the text that Philip was struggling with the

decision to relocate. For all we know, he had completed God's mission

in Samaria and was anticipating returning to his home in Jerusalem.

Nor is his Gaza road assignment a posting to a desolate region.

Instead, he is walking just outside the Jerusalem city limits, on the

road that leads south through the desert to Gaza, and is being

overtaken by the traffic exiting from the city.

The point of - Acts 8 - Acts 8} is not the ministry choices a

godly man should make, but rather how the Spirit is expanding the

church into previously excluded countries and social classes. And,

obviously, point II is an absurd extreme of what can result when we

incorrectly attach biblical statements to our chosen topics.

Topical preaching that is truly biblical thoroughly studies each

individual passage in its context to make sure the biblical author is

genuinely talking about the speaker's chosen subject. Properly done,

topical preaching will result in profitable messages, such as

"How to Be a Good Husband"

I. Live considerately ( - 1 Peter 3:7 - 1 Peter 3:7}).

II. Love sacrificially ( - Ephesians 5:25‑33 - Ephesians

5:25‑33}).

Or, in a message on "Honor Your Father and Mother"

I. In our early years, we honor our parents by obeying them

( - Ephesians 6:1‑3 - Ephesians 6:1‑3}).

II. In our middle years, we honor our parents by respecting them

( - Leviticus 19:3 - Leviticus 19:3}, - 32 - Leviticus

19:32}).

III. In our mature years, we honor our parents by assisting them

financially.

A. Assisting our parents financially comes ahead of

commitments to the Lord's work ( - Matthew 15:1‑9 - Matthew

15:1‑9}).

B. Assisting our parents financially shows our own

genuine godliness ( - 1 Timothy 5:3‑8 - 1 Timothy 5:3‑8}).

Sometimes a speaker may be tempted to use a general verse to speak to

a specific topic. For example, in the above message on "How to Be a

Good Husband," the speaker may be tempted to include "Forgive freely"

( - Colossians 3:13 - Colossians 3:13}) as one of the main

points. Or, in the message on "Honor Your Father and Mother," the

speaker may be inclined to make the point, "We honor our parents by

being kind and compassionate toward them" ( - Ephesians

4:32 - Ephesians 4:32}). While such statements may be true, the

listener senses: We're supposed to do this to everybody; that

Scripture is not uniquely about husbands, or parents.

In such cases, it is better to preach a passage exposition on the

specific verse, rather than a topical exposition on a subject. In a

passage exposition on - Colossians 3:13 - Colossians 3:13},

the speaker would explain what it means to freely forgive, and then

apply this to many relationships in lifehusbands, wives, parents,

co‑workers. Similarly, for - Ephesians 4:32 - Ephesians 4:32},

the speaker would explain kindness and compassion, and then illustrate

how we could show these to many different peopleparents, spouses,

children, harried sales clerks, and so on. In this way the topical

speaker saves specific verses for their specific subjects, and the

result is a message that has greater focus, penetration, and impact.

Finally, in biblical topical preaching, the subject will develop into

a central truth by means of either parallel or progressive assertions.

The assertions will be parallel when each individual passage answers

the same specific question about the subject. For example, in a sermon

on "God Speaks to You," each of the main points answers the same

question, "How does God speak to us?"

I. Through creation ( - Psalm 19:1‑6 - Psalms 19:1‑6 -

- Romans 1:18‑20 - Romans 1:18‑20})

II. Through conscience ( - Romans 2:14‑15 - Romans 2:14‑15})

III. Through Christ, the incarnate Word ( - Hebrews

1:1‑5 - Hebrews 1:1‑5})

IV. Through Scripture, the written Word ( - 2 Timothy

3:16‑17 - 2 Timothy 3:16‑17 - - 2 Peter 1:20‑21 - 2 Peter

1:20‑21}).

The assertions will be progressive when each individual passage

answers a different question about the subject. For example, a message

on "Fasting" might address the questions,

‑What is fasting?

‑How should we do it?

‑Why should we do it?

The main point assertions would progressively develop into a central

truth along the lines of:

‑Fasting is a voluntary refraining from food and drink

(various),

‑done in secret ( - Matthew 6:16‑18 - Matthew 6:16‑18}),

‑for the purpose of obtaining God's direction (Acts

13:1‑3; - Judges 20:26‑28 - Judges 20:26‑28}).

Done correctly, topical preaching can lead to a more comprehensive

understanding of a biblical doctrine or subject. But done incorrectly,

it can lead to ideas the Bible never intended to say. We need to study

thoroughly and organize carefully, to be sure we can say, "Thus saith

the Lord."

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Topical Preaching on Contemporary Issues Timothy S. Warren

- 1/2009.101

Topical Preaching on Contemporary Issues Timothy S. Warren

\webpage{http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/toproncois.html

How to preach expositionally when a current issue is the talk of the

town.

An article by Timothy S. Warren

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After more than four years of pastoral ministry at a church, I thought

it would be helpful to let my congregation choose a series for the

summer. Over those four years my paragraph‑by‑paragraph expositions

had covered several Epistles, the Minor Prophets, Genesis, and a few

selected Psalms, and had been supplemented along the way by textual

messages for special occasions. I had preached what I thought were the

most critical themes. That approach had been well received.

So I passed out three‑by‑five note cards and invited all regular

attenders to write down what they wanted to hear preached. The

results? The only book study suggested by more than three people was

on Revelation. All other requests were topical. And almost all touched

on a contemporary issue: "Talk about AIDS." "Is welfare biblical?"

"Are computers Satan's tool?" "What about evolution and the Bible?"

Saying something about these relevant issues would be no problem;

speaking with biblical authority would be the challenge.

A truly expositional preaching method made it possible. Since it is

text‑centered, expository preaching gives the sermon a "Thus says the

Lord" authority; and because it is audience‑focused, it provides

contemporary relevance. The message of an expository sermon must

clearly emerge out of the intended meaning of a biblical passage or

passages. That meaning must then be applied anew for the immediate

audience. Without both biblical authority and contemporary relevance,

a sermon, by most definitions, is not expository.

Many roads to the subject

There are at least three different styles of exposition. Textual

exposition bases its message in a single verse or sentence of

Scripture. Verse‑by‑verse, or paragraph, exposition bases its message

in two or more verses in a literary unit. Topical exposition bases its

message in two or more different biblical units which share a common

subject.

Within topical exposition there are at least three divisions.

Theological topical exposition finds its subject in a theological

topic specifically addressed in the Bible: marriage, temptation,

forgiveness, and so on. Biographical topical exposition finds its

subject in the original author's intentional use of a biblical

character to reveal a divine truth. Contemporary issue exposition

finds its subject in the context of current culture and then moves

back to Scripture to discover what passages address that issue.

Whether the preacher starts with a text, a paragraph, a theological

topic, a biblical character, or a contemporary issue is not a question

or concern for the person committed to expository preaching. What is

crucial is that the preacherwherever he has discovered his sermon

subjectmove into and then through the

exegetical‑theological‑homiletical process. Preachers cannot speak

with biblical authority unless they have discovered the original and

intended meaning of the passage(s), identified the timeless

theological message of the passage(s), and only then sought to apply

that truth with immediate relevance to a contemporary audience.

Sometimes theological and biographical expositions are initiated with

a topic from a contemporary setting (for example, the need for church

discipline or a challenge to wholehearted devotion to the Lord) and

then move to relatively easily identifiable biblical passages that

address that subject. On other occasions the theological or

biographical expositions begin with a passage (for instance,

- Matthew 18:15‑20 - Matthew 18:15‑20} or - Numbers

32:12 - Numbers 32:12}) that suggests the topic. The contemporary issue

exposition, however, always begins with a question, problem, struggle

that has emerged from within the context of contemporary culture (for

example, air or water pollution, weapons of mass destruction,

homosexuality, abortion, capitalism).

Challenges of preaching on current issues

I find contemporary issue exposition a greater challenge than

theological or biographical exposition, though those two have their

own challenges. One reason: current issues have multiple viewpoints

with multiple arguments. The question of our present response to crime

illustrates this challenge. The problems of unreliable witnesses,

convictions based on circumstantial evidence, and an overextended

judicial system make the question of capital punishment a complex

topic. How can a preacher hope to know, understand, and address the

multitude of related arguments?

The expositor who expects to maintain integrity will research the

topic sufficiently enough to know its major questions, and only then

strategically and candidly narrow the sermon's subject. Reading the

"experts" or those with different and opposing views can expose blind

spots and fill in gaps. It is presumptuous to speak on God's behalf

without knowing the basic facts.

Another reason I find contemporary issue exposition a greater

challenge than other forms of exposition is because of the typical

preacher's rush to relevance. When a topic surfaces in the give and

take of everyday life, it is easy to get caught up in the need for an

immediate, relevant answer. Preachers may find themselves preaching an

audience‑centered and audience‑focused message simply because the

popular "fix it now" and "how to" mentalities tempt them into sliding

past the exegetical and theological interpretation of relevant

biblical passages.

Sometimes there seems to be no biblical passage that addresses the

topic, at least in the way it is shaped by contemporary culture. No

texts address the topic with any explicit intent. For example, there

are passages that deal with the creation of the world as we know it,

but none that specifically address the debate between creationism and

evolution. To make and argue the contemporary issues is to misuse the

text and miss the intent of its author, resulting in a lack of

biblical authority and a compromise of integrity. To say, however,

that Genesis has nothing to offer the debate would be to fail to

consider some significant inferences from what Moses did intend.

Ranges of biblical meaning

As we try to address current issues like this from Scripture, we need

to answer two crucial questions.

First, what ranges of biblical meaning lead to legitimate authority in

preaching? My friend Ramesh Richard taught me that biblical texts

communicate over three ranges of meaning: statement, implication, and

extrapolation. When the Bible says, "You shall not commit adultery,"

that's statement. This statement could lead to a meaning implied by

the Exodus 20:14 text: marriage is sacred. That's implication. The

condemnation of all sexual activity outside marriage would be an

extrapolation, a further drawing out of meaning, from the text.

Application is another question. "Never have sex with anyone other

than your spouse" is an obvious application of the biblical statement.

"Cultivate your own marriage" is a possible application of that text's

implication. "Avoid pornography" is a legitimate application of the

extrapolation. All may be preached with authority. The issue is not

whether the applications are legitimate, but rather, whether all the

ranges of meaning have been legitimately validated. Expositors of

contemporary issues must move with caution through the ranges of

meaning to keep from finding implications or extrapolations that

cannot be proven consistent with the original intent of the passage.

Second, how do contemporary issue preachers signal the level of

meaning from which they are preaching? I suggest we simply state,

"This passage does not specifically address our topic, at least not in

the same way we are considering it. However, there are some

implications (or extrapolations) we can legitimately draw from this

passage that will help us decide how we should respond to today's

issue."

I believe God has spoken explicitly and absolutely on some subjects.

On many subjects the Scriptures are not explicit; we are left with

implications or extrapolations. Knowing the difference and expressing

a proper tentativeness seems prudent.

A crime in my community

A few years ago a paroled sex offender raped and killed a child,

provoking outrage in our community. I prepared the following message

knowing I couldn't say everything, but that I should say something:

Once my topic found me, I chased down close to 50 passages. A

concordance and topical index proved invaluable for my initial search;

then cross references guided me to further texts. I started exegeting

each text in its original context to determine its intended meaning.

When a passage seemed not to address my topic even by implication or

extrapolation, I dropped it. Since no text provided a statement about

child sex offenders specifically, I worked with implications and

extrapolations. It seemed that several passages made legitimate

contributions by addressing sex crimes and justice in general.

Theological propositions often address more than one topic at the

abstract level. For example, in - Deuteronomy

17:2‑7 - Deuteronomy 17:2‑7} Moses speaks to the specific issue of

providing idolaters due process. Few people in my culture wrestle with

how to handle idolaters. But by taking Moses' message to the

theological level we can generalize a message for any criminal

violation. "Any accused criminal deserves due process." That truth

applied to idolaters in Moses' day. It just as authoritatively applies

to any contemporary issue of supposed criminal behavior. It is at the

level of the theological abstraction that ancient and contemporary

particulars meet. That's why it's essential to move through the

exegetical and theological processesto insure a proper understanding

of biblical meaning. Only then may new applications of timeless truth

be affirmed.

I'm certain my message left much unsaid. In fact, I always have that

nagging feeling when I preach a contemporary issue. However, when an

issue so captivates a congregation that not to speak would signal

indifference, contemporary issue topical exposition enables the

preacher to address the issue with authority and relevance.

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6 Reasons ‑ Expository Preaching ‑ D. A. Carson

- 1/2009.101

PREACHING SKILLS

Teaching the Whole Bible

Six reasons to do expository preaching

D. A. Carson

Printer view

Topics: Expository preaching; Scripture; Style; Teaching; Textual

preaching

Puritan theologian William Perkins wrote that preaching "has four

great principles: to read the text distinctly, from canonical

Scripture; to give it sense and understanding according to the

Scripture itself; to collect a few profitable points of doctrine out

of its natural sense; and to apply, if you have the gift, the

doctrines to the life and manner of men in a simple and plain speech."

There is something refreshingly simple about that. Our aim as

preachers is not to be the most erudite scholar of the age. Our aim is

not to titillate and amuse. Our aim is not to build a big church. Our

aim is to take the sacred text, explain what it means, tie it to other

Scriptures so people can see the whole a little better, and apply it

to life so it bites and heals, instructs and edifies. What better way

to accomplish this end than through expository preaching?

Benefits of exposition

Some use the category expository preaching for all preaching that is

faithful to Scripture. I distinguish expository preaching from topical

preaching, textual preaching, and others, for the expository sermon

must be controlled by a Scripture text or texts. Expository preaching

emerges directly and demonstrably from a passage or passages of

Scripture.

There are a number of reasons why expository preaching deserves to be

our primary method of proclamation.

1. It is the method least likely to stray from Scripture. If you are

preaching on what the Bible says about self‑esteem, for example,

undoubtedly you can find some useful insights. But even when you say

entirely true things, you will likely abstract them from the Bible's

central story line. Expository preaching keeps you to the main thing.

2. It teaches people how to read their Bibles. Especially if you're

preaching a long passage, expository preaching teaches people how to

think through a passage, how to understand and apply God's Word to

their lives.

3. It gives confidence to the preacher and authorizes the sermon. If

you are faithful to the text, you are certain your message is God's

message. Regardless of what is going on in the churchwhether it is

growing or whether people like youyou know you are proclaiming God's

truth. That is wonderfully freeing.

4. It meets the need for relevance without letting the clamor for

relevance dictate the message. All true preaching is properly applied.

That is of extraordinary importance in our generation. But expository

preaching keeps the eternal central to the discussion.

5. It forces the preacher to handle the tough questions. You start

working through text after text, and soon you hit passages on divorce,

on homosexuality, on women in ministry, and you have to deal with the

text.

6. It enables the preacher to expound systematically the whole counsel

of God. In the last fifteen years of his life, John Calvin expounded

Genesis, Deuteronomy, Judges, Job, some psalms, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1

Kings, the major and minor prophets, the Gospels in a harmony, Acts,

- 1 - Acts 1} and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,

- 1 - Ephesians 1} and 2 Thessalonians, and the pastoral

epistles.

I'm not suggesting we organize ourselves exactly the same way. But if

we are to preach the whole counsel of God, we must teach the whole

Bible. Other sermonic structures have their merits, but none offers

our congregations more, week after week, than careful, faithful

exposition of the Word of God.

D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and author of

numerous books, including The Cross and Christian Ministry (Baker,

2004) and Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church (Zondervan,

2005).

\webpage{http://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/artcraft/108‑‑carson.html

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Preaching ‑ Using a Computer

- 1/2009.101

PREACHING ‑ Using a Computer

PREACHING SKILLS

Making the Most of Your Computer

I can't imagine preaching without my electronic research assistant and

sermon coach

Richard Doebler

Printer view

Topics: Computer resources; Organization; Research; Tools

Our culture has become tied to technology so that computers play a

serious and ever‑increasing role in my ministry, especially in my

preaching.

I can hear the skeptics: "God won't send his anointing through a

Pentium processor." Something so blatantly material seems unspiritual.

If I become too consumed with my PowerPoint, might I miss God's power?

Yes, it's true. Computers can impoverish my soul while improving my

image. I must remind myself: new software will not help me preach with

greater power or stronger conviction. Electronic wizardry cannot

replace spiritual gifts. Microsoft does not open the windows of

heaven. In short, computers cannot substitute for ministry basicsa

heart for God, spiritual disciplines, personal and professional

integrity, and diligent study.

However, despite the hazards, I remain committed to using technology

in ministry. Computers have done two things for my sermons: (1)

improved my study and preparation methods, and (2) polished my

delivery techniques.

Turbo‑charged study

I still use my books, but technology has beefed up my study and cut my

prep time.

Better Bible research

Everyone uses Bible software differently. Some focus on original Greek

and Hebrew studies. Others use CD commentaries, vast libraries crammed

into small spaces. I use Bible software in simple, utilitarian ways,

mostly comparing translations. Software can provide me with 12, 16, or

more versions, side by side. My books can do that, but only with a

desk the size of a Ping‑Pong table.

Software performs concordance‑like searches for topics or words, only

faster and more comprehensively. I can print verses containing a word,

several words, or a specific phrase, or copy verses into sermon notes

in my word processor.

Better sermon illustrations

I subscribe to a couple of Internet services that offer collections of

illustrations. It's almost like having a research assistant collecting

and organizing stories. I can search for a specific word or topic

among a huge database and view contemporary anecdotes, quotations,

historical items, or humorous stories.

The only downside I've encountered is information overload. On

occasion, I've collected up to 50 pages of (mostly) relevant stories

for a single sermon. I've had to set limits, otherwise I could spend

more time than ever on sermon preparation.

Better general research

If a network news program reports a quote I'd like to use, I can

usually retrieve the exact quote through news archives or

transcription services available on the Internet. The Internet offers

quick access to otherwise obscure information. Late one Saturday

night, I realized that a reading I'd seen more than 20 years ago would

be an ideal addition to my sermon. The next morning, I did a quick

Internet search and found One Solitary Life.

Better filing

I used to collect illustrations in notebooks and file folders. No

more. Now I save them in a computer file. This works for me because I

recall stories more by a name or detail than by the topic. I won't

remember whether I filed it under "perseverance" or "persistence" or

"patience" or something else. If I remember some story was about

Frederick the Great, I let the computer do the searching.

I store my sermons on disk and can easily refer to an old sermon. Some

search tools do word searches through an entire directory or drive. In

other words, I don't have to open each file separately to search for a

particular word. This is especially helpful when I want to find a

story I've already used.

Better notes and manuscripts

If you still prefer a typewriter or legal pad, fine. But drafting and

editing sermon notes on the computer works better for me.

Buffed up delivery

When it comes to preaching, nothing can take the place of divine

anointing, deep passion, and a commitment to speak authentically. But

I can still improve my speaking skills by tapping new technology.

Preaching to the eye

Presentation software allows me to show key sermon points to

listeners. I've also projected poignant quotes, Scripture texts, even

photos, drawings, and maps. The congregation's attentiveness and

comprehension improve when I connect with their eyes as well as their

ears. When I first started using presentation software, one man told

me, "I never realized how much of a visual learner I am."

Even before we got a videoDate Originally Filed - ata projector, I improved my sermons by

generating overhead transparencies of sermon points with my computer.

Using Bible software, I made color transparencies of Bible maps and

photos of archaeological sites.

An unexpected bonus of using presentation software has been a more

disciplined editing of my sermon. Rambling sentences don't communicate

well on screen. Concise, logical points reduce my tendency to be

wordy.

Preaching to the heart

The computer sparks my creative energies. I no longer think merely

words and outlines. I also consider photos, video, and graphic

designs. For instance, I might accentuate a message with a musical

montage. On Independence Day we laid the words to America over a

series of patriotic and historic photos. The congregation not only

read and sang the words, they made an emotional connection with scenes

of the Statue of Liberty and Vietnam Memorial.

Richard Doebler is pastor of Cloquet Gospel Tabernacle in Cloquet,

Minnesota.

\webpage{http://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/artcraft/158‑‑doebler.htm

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Preaching - Topical Cartoons

- 1/2009.101

http://thebackpew.com/backpew/bible\_topical.htm

Humor - You Know Your Are in Trouble When Our Guest Speaker Begins . . .

- 1/2009.101

You Know Your Are in Trouble When Our Guest Speaker Begins . . .

. . . A funny thing happened on the way to the church this morning ...

. . . Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking . . .

. . . Did you hear the one about the three ministers on an airplane .

. .

. . . Here are the notes for the sermon I was going to give, but I've

decided not to give that message and simply say some things that need

to be said . . .

. . . Webster defines (insert any word) as . . .

. . . My wife doesn't like this sermon, but I decided to go ahead with

it anyway . . .

. . . This morning's message has eighteen points . . .

. . . Last night I had a dream of footprints in the sand . . .

. . . Cereal boxes don't usually lead to sermon ideas, but this

morning . . .

. . . There are some topics that thirty minutes just can't do justice

. . .

. . . I was digging through some old seminary class notes this week .

. .

. . . At first glance, variants between the Septuagint and the

Masoretic Text don `t seem all that interesting, but . . .

. . . Over the last few months, while struggling with my sexual

identity . . .

. . . I normally prepare my sermons in advance, but today . . .

‑‑‑‑ Kevin Miller, Leadership Journal

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Koller's ‑ Key Words

- 1/2009.101

Koller's ‑ Key Words

Charles Koller, "Expository Preaching without Notes," offers these

objects as "Key Words."

These are "Transitional Verbs."

Examples:

"This text raises . . . questions."

"The Lord makes . . . promises."

"The Apostle delivers . . . charges."

"The Prophet points out . . . reasons."

"The situation calls for . . . responses."

"Faithfulness leads to . . . satisfactions."

abuses

accusations

acts

actualities

admonitions

advantages

affairs

affirmations

agreements

aims

alternatives

angles

answers

applications

approaches

areas

arguments

aspects

aspirations

assertions

assumptions

assurances

attainments

altitudes

attributes

barriers

beginnings

beliefs

benefits

blessings

calls

causes

certainties

challenges

changes

charges

claims

clues

commitments

comparisons

compensations

compromises

compulsions

conceptions

concessions

conclusions

conditions

consequences

contrasts

corrections

credentials

criteria

criticisms

customs

dangers

decisions

declarations

defenses

deficiencies

definitions

degrees

demands

denials

destinies

details

devices

differences

directions

directives

disciplines

disclosures

discoveries

distinctions

doctrines

duties

elements

encouragements

essentials

estimates

events

evidences

evils

examples

exchanges

exclamations

exhortations

expectations

experiences

expressions

facets

factors

Facts

failures

faults

favors

fears

features

finalities

forces

functions

fundamentals

gains

generalizations

gifts

graces

groups

habits

handicaps

hopes

hungers

ideas

imperatives

implications

impressions

improvements

impulses

incentives

incidents

indictments

inferences

injunctions

insights

inspirations

instances

instructions

instruments

intimations

invitations

items

joys

judgments

justifications

kinds

lessons

levels

liabilities

losses

loyalties

manifestations

marks

methods

mistakes

moments

motives

movements

mysteries

needs

notions

objections

observations

obstacles

offers

omissions

opinions

opportunities

particulars

peculiarities

penalties

perils

phases

phrases

pledges

points

possibilities

practices

premises

prerogatives

principles

priorities

probabilities

problems

processes

promises

promptings

pronouncements

proofs

prophecies

propositions

provisions

qualifications

qualities

questions

realities

realizations

reasons

reflections

refusals

remarks

remedies

reminders

requirements

reservations

resources

response!

restraints

result

revelations

rewards

risks

rules

safeguards

satisfactions

secrets

sins

sources

specifications

statements

steps

stipulations

successes

suggestions

superlatives

suppositions

surprises

symptoms

tendencies

testimonies

tests

thoughts

threats

topics

totalities

truths

urges

uses

values

views

violations

virtues

voices

warnings

ways

weaknesses

words

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Points That Help Sermon Spark

- 1/2009.101

Points that help sermon sparkle:

Anticipation ‑ Help people know your are going to answer a question or

meet a need.

Application ‑ How can I use this? How does this connect with my

humanity?

Action ‑ What am I to do? We are looking for action points.

Simple (Artless) ‑ Deep. Muddy. Clear.

Illustrations ‑ Math in school, more than told, you were shown the

working out the problems.

Errors in Preaching

\* Preaching to Congregations rather than to people. Picture yourself

preaching to an individual.

\* Echoing others, not the Holy Spirit (preaching like other

ministers). (Paraclete to the paraclete.)

\* Robots, not relationship. Reading the text with heart and passion,

not a recording.

\* Distractions. Illustrations that went to long. It didn't build but

took away.

\* Soon‑Forgotten. Could it be there wasn't anything memorable. Offer a

simple organized outline. Offer three or four points. Clearly state

the main point. Each point should build the main point. The transition

between points should have a flow.

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Errors in Preaching

Errors in Preaching

\* Preaching to Congregations rather than to people. Picture yourself

preaching to an individual.

\* Echoing others, not the Holy Spirit (preaching like other

ministers). (Paraclete to the paraclete.) Be yourself. God will use

you in a unique way. He called you.

\* Robots, not relationship. Reading the text with heart and passion,

not a recording. We need to "stop, look and listen." How is the

congregation responding?

\* Distractions. Illustrations that went to long. It didn't build but

took away.

\* Soon‑Forgotten. Could it be there wasn't anything memorable. Offer a

simple organized outline. Offer three or four points. Clearly state

the main point. Each point should build the main point. The transition

between points should have a flow.

\* Not Praying. God will lead.

\* Evaluation. After the fact, how can you improve? If you preached

again, what would you do differently?

\* Failure to Eliminate. Cut out what is not relevant.

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Preaching Evaluation Sheet

- 1/2009.101

PREACHING EVALUATION SHEET

GRADE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10 AND AVERAGE THE TOTAL.

OVERALL GRADE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SPEAKER \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SPEECH ATTITUDES

SINCERITY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CONFIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

FRIENDLINESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

FREEDOM OF DELIVERY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

THOUGHT

WORTHINESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CLARITY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTING \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DEVELOPMENT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

USE OF THE BODY

PLATFORM PRESENCE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MOVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

GESTURES \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

EYE CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ILLUSTRATIONS

RESOURCEFULNESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VALUE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SUPPORTIVENESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VOICE

QUALITY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PITCH \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

RATE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VOLUME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

BREATH SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

LANGUAGE

CLARITY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ACCURACY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VIVIDNESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

GRAMMAR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

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An Honest Way to Plagiarize

- 1/2009.101

An Honest Way to Plagiarize

Each September. Carl W, Garrett preaches other people's sermons at

First Baptist Church, Carthage, Missouri. He's not trying to deceive,

however; he calls the series "Sermons I Wish I'd Written."

"My book shelves were lined with volumes of great sermons that really

deserved another hearing," he says. "1 knew my congregation would

enjoy them if 1 could just think of an honest way to preach them."

The annual series became a hit as Garrett recycled material from

old‑timers (Billy Sunday) as well as Southern Baptist con temporaries

(Wade Paris, Wayne DeHoney). "I try to find out as much as I can about

the original preparation and the preacher," he says. "This all becomes

part of the publicity to the congregation.

"I've been able to deliver some of the sermons almost word for word

having memorized the manuscript," Garrett explains. "Others I've had

to adapt to fit my preaching style."

The result: a fresh change of pace for the pastor and a broadened

exposure for the congregation.

Leadership 100, November‑December, 1983, p21.

/mCreation ‑ Evolution

/sBook Review: Defeating Darwin

/i

Date Originally Filed - 1/2009.101

/t

/fN

Book Review: Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds

Review of Phillip E. Johnson, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds,

InterVarsity Press, 1997.

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E‑mail:

Imagine this: a law professor with no scientific training, after a

mid‑life crisis in which he became a fundamentalist Christian,

announces that Newton's laws are wrong. Scientists only believe

Newton's laws, he claims, because they have a prior commitment to

"naturalism". The scientific evidence for Newton's laws is weak, he

claims, and depends mostly on clever word games, where scientists

first talk about motion of objects on the earth ("micromotion") and

then extrapolate to the movements of the heavenly bodies

("macromotion"). We do not see objects on the earth moving about by

themselves; any moving object is always the result of an intelligence

that set that object in motion. The law professor writes books

decrying Newtonism and discussing the social decay it leads to. He

organizes conferences and develops a strategy for getting supernatural

explanations for motion taught in science classes.

Sound farfetched? Perhaps. But just change "Newtonism" to "Darwinism"

and you've got the strange crusade of Berkeley law professor Phillip

Johnson, exemplified in this silly and dishonest book.

Looking for scientific evidence against evolution? You won't find it

here (or anywhere else, for that matter). What you will find is the

kind of rhetoric lawyers are skilled at: if the facts and law are

against you, pound the table.

You'll also find deep misunderstandings of the nature of science

(which doesn't "prove" its theories, as suggested on p. 42) and

information (which, contrary to Johnson's claims on p. 73, can indeed

be generated by physical processes).

This book could be the basis for an easy and fun game called "liar or

fool". Nearly every page offers a choice. When Johnson claims (p. 94)

that "We know that the Darwinian mechanism doesn't work and that

complex biological systems never were put together by the accumulation

of random mutations through natural selection", is it a lie or just

stupidity? And who is the "we", anyway? It certainly doesn't refer to

people who actually study biology for a living, since 99% of them

accept that evolution is the best explanation for the diversity of

life as we see it today.

When Johnson defines macroevolution as "the vaguely described process

that supposedly creates innovations such as new complex organs or body

parts" (p. 57), is it a lie or just ignorance of the definition

actually used by biologists?

This book, distributed by a fundamentalist Christian publisher, will

only interest fundamentalists who deny evolution because of their

adherence to a narrow, sectarian point of view. Johnson is not

interested in "opening minds", but rather in appealing to the kind of

person who has a bumper sticker on their car reading "Jesus said it, I

believe it, and that settles it". No doubt they'll buy this book in

droves, writing "How true" in crayon in the margins.

\webpage{http://www.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~shallit/johnson.html

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Sermon Evaluation Form

- 1/2009.101

Sermon Evaluation Form

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another

( - Proverbs 27:17 - Proverbs 27:17}).

Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Text:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Key (circle one): 5=Very Good 4=Good 3=Fair 2=Poor 1=Very Poor

CONTENT

5 4 3 2 1 1. Did he open with effective introductory remarks?

5 4 3 2 1 2. Was the lesson well‑organized?

5 4 3 2 1 3. Was there an evident central purpose?

5 4 3 2 1 4. Was the central purpose the communication of a Biblical

concept?

5 4 3 2 1 5. Was the Biblical concept drawn primarily from one

thought‑block of Scripture?

5 4 3 2 1 6. Was the Biblical concept responsibly interpreted in

context?

5 4 3 2 1 7. Was the subject appropriate for the audience?

5 4 3 2 1 8. Had he done sufficient preparation and research?

5 4 3 2 1 9. Was the message meaningfully applied to the hearers?

5 4 3 2 1 10. Were effective illustrations used?

5 4 3 2 1 11. Was the lesson Biblically accurate?

5 4 3 2 1 12. Were the concluding remarks accurate and effective?

DELIVERY

5 4 3 2 1 13. Did he keep the lesson moving?

5 4 3 2 1 14. Was he grammatically correct?

5 4 3 2 1 15. Did he have any distracting mannerisms?

5 4 3 2 1 16. Was his pronunciation correct?

5 4 3 2 1 17. Did he speak loudly and clearly?

5 4 3 2 1 18. Was his attitude warm and friendly?

5 4 3 2 1 19. Was eye‑contact sufficient and effective?

5 4 3 2 1 20. Were visual aids (including PowerPoint) clear and

effective?

OTHER COMMENTS

Reviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E‑mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\webpage{http://www.fourlakescoc.org/Sermons/howtoprepareasermon/2576‑W

riteSermon.pdf

Developing a Textual Sermon

- 1/2009.101

Developing a Textual Sermon

From Text to Sermon by John L. Pennisi

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever preach a textual sermon? Do you know what a textual

sermon is and can you readily identify one? Can you distinguish it

from a topical or expository sermon? How do you develop a textual

sermon? If I had been asked these questions, I could not have given

very adequate answers during most of my past years in the ministry.

I took several courses on preaching, read a number of books on

homiletics, and preached many sermons. But I never gave much

attention to the distinctions between these sermon classifications.

For years I have classified and recorded my sermons in three ways:

(1) by their objective (evangelistic, doctrinal, consecrational,

devotional, ethical, supportive, and promotional); (2) by their

general subject (attitudes, character, family, salvation, sin,

worship, etc.); and (3) by the text used. These categories have been

extremely useful and practical to me. Also be aware of each sermon's

classification based on the way the biblical text is utilized. This

reveals to us if we are serving to the congregation every Sunday only

a constant menu of topical sermons. Or are we preaching so many

textual sermons that the members think this is the only way to

preach? Or have we been playing the same tune so constantly with

expository sermons that a mediocre topical sermon by a visiting

speaker sounds like a fresh, new masterpiece from the world.s

greatest maestro?

It is no simple task to present meaningful, moving, life‑transforming

sermons every week for ten, twenty, thirty years or more. Does our

preaching get better the longer we preach and the older we get? Is it

possible we preached better sermons years ago than we do today? Have

we given attention to our craft and to the products of our handiwork?

Preaching can grow stale and preachers can burn out. One way to avoid

this development is to become a wise craftsman who knows all of the

skills. We should train ourselves well in the art

of sermon preparation. A facet of that craftsmanship is understanding

how to develop textual sermons as well as other types.

A young man once joined a construction team. Like all new men on the

job he had to prove himself. He had to work his way up and pay his

dues in order to become part of the .team.. He was given the task of

working with a very heavy sledgehammer. The other workers joked that

he would not last long on the job.that he could not take it. Anxious

to demonstrate his strength and ability, the young man labored long

with the sledgehammer. His youthful vigor provided much energy for

the job. In spite of his enthusiasm and desire, however, he found his

strength waning after the first couple of days. He knew he could not

continue long. Then a voice called to him. An older worker with

creases of experience lining his face came to him and said, .Here,

let me show you how to do that.. The young man felt ridiculous

allowing someone to teach him how to perform such a simple task. Glad

to take a rest, however, he sat down, watched, and listened. The

older man explained, .The hammer itself will do the work if you just

let it. Do not stop it in its arc. Let it swing in your arms like a

pendulum and use only a minimum of your own strength.. The young man

accepted the suggestion, learned to follow through and conserve his

energy in the swing, and stayed on the job.

Can preaching be similar to working with a sledgehammer? If we do not

know the basic elements of homiletics, the .tools of the trade,. and

the fundamentals essential to sermon construction, our initial

ability and enthusiasm may play out after a few years.

I. WHAT IS A TEXTUAL SERMON? The concept of a textual sermon and its

distinction from an expository sermon have not been clearly

described in many books on homiletics. Some writers base the

distinction simply on the length of the text chosen. For example,

Blackwood says that an expository sermon .grows out of a Bible

passage longer than two or three verses. Theoretically, such a sermon

differs from the textual one chiefly in the length of the Scripture

units; practically, the two terms often overlap..1 James Daane feels

that this distinction .is not based on a significant difference and

hence confuses more than it clarifies..2

Most writers bring in a second element to define the textual sermon.

Not only must it be confined to a relatively short passage, the

major divisions must be expressed in the exact words of the text.

Ideally the theme or title of the lesson finds expression also in the

words of the text.

A third characteristic of a textual sermon is that the major

divisions or headings in the outline usually follow the order of

thought contained in the text. There is no rearranging of the order

to suit the whim of the preacher for the purpose of his lesson.

These three characteristics are contained in the following outline:

Text: - Colossians 1:3‑5 - Colossians 1:3‑5

Title: .We Give Thanks to God.

I. Having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus. (4)

II. And of the love which ye have toward all the saints. (4)

III. Because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens.

(5)3

The information in verse 3 regarding the Father and prayer can be

included in the introduction indicating to whom and how the thanks

is offered. The three major divisions treat faith, hope, and love,

subjects which can be developed and illustrated using other parts of

Colossians or of the Bible. The specific objectives of the lesson

would be to encourage the listeners to give thanks to God as Paul and

Timothy did.

A textual sermon entitled .So Walk in Him. can be preached from

- Colossians 2:6 - Colossians 2:6}, - 7 - Colossians

2:7}, a consecrational lesson to teach Christians how to conduct

themselves:

I. As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord. (6)

II. Rooted. (7)

III. Builded up in him. (7)

IV. Established in your faith. (7)

V. Even as ye were taught. (7)

VI. Abounding in thanksgiving. (7)

II. HOW CAN I FIND A TEXT? Some texts nearly jump out of the

Scriptures, crying to be preached. Many are well known, making them

even more valuable for a textual sermon. For example, - 1

Timothy 4:12 - 1 Timothy 4:12} can be entitled .Be Thou an Example to

Them That Believe. with the following major divisions:

I. In word.

II. In manner of life.

III. In love.

IV. In faith.

V. In purity.

Another example is - Micah 6:8 - Micah 6:8}, using the title

"What Doth Jehovah Require of Thee?."

I. To do justly.

II. To love kindness.

III. To walk humbly with thy God. - Romans 8:28 - Romans

8:28} can be entitled .All Things Work Together for Good. with the

following headings:

I. To them that love God.

II. To them that are called according to his purpose .

Other texts require more dedication to the Word. You can find them by

carefully outlining a book for yourself. Outlining Philippians, I

found in - 1:19 - Philippians 1:19},

- 20 - Philippians 1:20} a lesson on .Christian Expectations

in the Face of Death.. This title is based fully on the text but not

worded from it.

I. This shall turn out to my salvation. (19)

II. In nothing shall I be put to shame. (20)

III. hrist shall be magnified in my body. (20)

A. Whether by life. (20)

B. Or by death. (20)

The study in Philippians also revealed a fine lesson for a

congregation when its missionary must return home:

Text: - Philippians 2:28‑30 - Philippians 2:28‑30

Title: When Ye See Epaphroditus Again. (or When Your Missionary

Returns.)

I. Receive him. (29)

II. In the Lord. (29)

III. With all joy. (29)

IV. Hold such in honor. (29)

You can do this also. Outlining carefully and thoughtfully the books

of the Bible is the most productive method of study I use. Some

writers feel that the number of passages is very limited that lend

themselves to true textual sermons. I believe that the principle

limitation is our lack of use of and familiarity with the text.

Batsell Barrett Baxter in The Heart of the Yale Lectures quotes

Charles Reynolds Brown as saying:

The best sermon themes are suggested mainly by the habitual,

thoughtful, devotional reading of the Scriptures. The varied

literature of the Bible covers a wide range of human need and

privilege. The Bible is like a broad, thick slice of human

experience which has found expression here in superb literary form.

All the sins men commit are there; all the virtues, all the vital

interests, all the high opportunities for fellowship with the

Eternal. . . .4

Brown was not speaking merely of textual sermons. The Bible supplies

the gems and gold for every jeweled sermon. It seeks to speak first

to the preacher that he may speak to others.

III. SUCH A SHORT TEXT? How can you prepare a full sermon based on a

short text? This may not present as great a problem today as it did

years ago when preachers and audiences were accustomed to longer

discourses. Yet a shorter period of time to preach demands even more

careful preparation. Where do you begin?

The preparation of a textual sermon demands no less of the preacher

than an expository sermon. He must know his text and its full

context. The passage should be chosen as early as possible to allow

time to get acquainted with it, develop close intimacy, and grow up

with its influence. Do your own study at first in several versions

without consulting any commentaries, sermon books, or other sources.

Try to climb into the mind of the author and ask, .What did he mean

in this context?. Then try to understand the passage from the

standpoint of the addresses in their particular situation. Next,

begin to ask what the message is to you personally: .How can I

benefit from it?. Finally, begin to apply it to your audience and to

their perceived needs in their situation.

This demands that you master fully the context and the relationship

that your text bears to

the book in which it is contained. Grapple with it until you have

grasped its message. Outline it. Ask what is the major theme and how

is this theme developed. Resist the temptation to .fudge. the text

toward your own conclusion. Let it .fudge. you. Look for genuine ore

in God.s treasure chest. Like a skilled diamond cutter bring to

light and full view the beauty, worth, and power of divine truth.

Once you have completed your own fresh study, turn to lexicons,

dictionaries, commentaries, and sermon materials. When they offer

additional, worthwhile material, consider it carefully. Is it really

appropriate to your text? Is someone else.s analysis or insight an

improvement to yours?

Seek to discover the single dominant theme of the passage you intend

to treat. Then incorporate that theme in your own sermon. Every

teacher of speech and preaching whose work I have read for the last

thirty years agrees that only one central idea can be effectively

communicated in a sermon. Many describe this central idea as the

thesis, theme, proposition, or subject sentence of the sermon. Write

it out as the gist of the passage and of your sermon. Express it in

one concise and complete sentence.

For a textual sermon, attempt to find the phrase in the text that

best expresses the central idea. This phrase must provide a line of

direction through the text from which all the major divisions can be

hung. In the examples provided you can see that each major division

is a logical subdivision of a central idea contained in the title.

At the conclusion the listeners will have seen every aspect of the

theme that is in this text and that is essential to establish the

theme and the sermon.s single purpose.

Summarizing, once you have completed your analysis of the text,

consider these questions:

(1) Is this text appropriate for a textual sermon? (If it is not,

prepare an expository or topical sermon.) (2) Can the theme be

expressed in the exact words of the text? (3) Can the major

divisions of the sermon be expressed in the exact words or phrases

of the text and in the order that they appear?

IV. PROBLEMS WITH TEXTUAL SERMONS The greatest problem associated

with textual sermons in the past is .text‑beating,. so de scribed by

Hogue.5 Ilion T. Jones reminds us that successful comedians have made

audiences roar with laughter by imitating an easily recognized fault

of some textual sermons. Using the poetry of .Little Bo Peep. and

.Old Mother Hubbard. as texts, they strained the meaning out of each

word and syllable.6 Hogue illustrates this with a sermon entitled

.The Little Bumble Bee.. .First, it is a bee; secondly, it is a

bumble bee; and thirdly, it is a little bumble bee..7 Such parody

resulted primarily from preaching that was poor in preparation and

in personal involvement in the text and its context.

Textual sermons have also been abused by some who treat the text as

if it were some sort of pliable substance to be stretched according

to the whim of the preacher. Like rubber or like dough kneaded by a

baker, no one can tell what shape it may take. Such abuse of

Scripture shows no respect for its inspiration and authority.

A text may also be chosen while the context is totally ignored,

distorting the true meaning and application of the words. For

example, a preacher could base his sermon on - 1

Corinthians 1:17 - 1 Corinthians 1:17}, entitle it .For Christ Sent

Me,. and develop such major divisions as:

I. Not to baptize.

II. But to preach the gospel.

III. Not in wisdom of words.

To be faithful to the context he would certainly need to point out

that Paul as an apostle was sent in a sense quite different from the

preacher today. He also would be required to explain carefully what

is meant by .not to baptize. in the context of 1 Corinthians and the

entire New Testament.

V. THE VALUE OF TEXTUAL SERMONS Textual sermons demand that the

preacher confine his sermon to the message contained in the text.

Some preaching reveals an inability to distinguish between biblical

preaching and an after‑dinner speech or a good personal opinion

expressed in a town meeting or an excellent personal testimony based

merely on human feeling and experience. Christian preachers gain an

audience because of their faithful and cautious delivery of the

written Word of God. They are to be spokesmen for God, not purveyors

of their own irreverent speculations. No one hired the

preacher because he is the wisest of all men nor because his thoughts

and suppositions are closer to God than those of others. The textual

sermon aids the preacher to confine himself to the only source

available of divine wisdom.

By using the very words contained in the passage, the textual sermon

calls attention to the Bible and emphasizes its inspiration,

authority, and essentiality as the source of our knowledge of God.

The development of the major points right out of the text facilitates

the preacher.s sermon preparation. He does not have to labor over

what the next point should be. The sermon.s introduction can also be

based on the context of the passage.

Textual sermons also facilitate recall by the listeners especially if

they are based on familiar passages. Over fifteen years ago I heard

George Tipps of Fort Worth, Texas, preach a textual sermon entitled

.Keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. from

- Ephesians 4:3‑6 - Ephesians 4:3‑6}. He was visiting us in

Sao Paulo, Brazil, and spoke through an interpreter. Today, I still

associate the passage with his excellent message. The text is a

little long for a textual sermon and the lesson has seven major

divisions. But it can be preached successfully. George Tipps

delivered it in less than thirty minutes while using an interpreter!

CONCLUSION

Preaching is the greatest work given by God to man. It is also a

grave responsibility. As keen craftsmen let us learn to classify our

wares and to discard some when they do not meet the standard. When

they do contain the gospel, let us learn to move and motivate, to

lift up and crush, to break men and inspire them to feel that they

have walked with God this day and stood in His very presence.

FOOTNOTES

1 Andrew W. Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons (New York:

Abingdon Press, 1948), p. 64.

2 James Daane, Preaching with Confidence (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm.

B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), p. 51.

3 All the examples of textual sermon outlines are based on the ASV.

4 Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (Grand

Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1947), p. 212.

5 Wilson T. Hogue, A Handbook of Homiletics and Pastor al Theology

(Winona Lake, Ind.: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1940), p. 46.

6 Ilion T. Jones, Principles and Practice of Preaching (New York:

Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 83.

7 Hogue.

http://www.biblecourses.com/en\_lessons/EN\_198502\_08.pdf

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Illustrating with Integrity and Sensitivity - 7 Questions for Staying above Reproach - Wayne Harvey

Illustrating with Integrity

- 1/2009.101

Illustrating with Integrity and Sensitivity

7 questions for staying above reproach

Wayne Harvey

Printer view

Topics: Ethics of Preaching; Illustrations; Plagiarism; Quotations;

Resources

Several years ago I heard a sermon illustration I thought was great

for demonstrating determination. I decided to use it. Here's the

story:

On the last day of the 1956 Olympic Games, Austria had yet to win a

gold medal. Its only hope was in a young Austrian named Johann who had

entered the rapid‑fire pistol competition. His teammates weren't

disappointed. As he fired his last shot, he gave his country their

single gold medal.

When Johann returned to his homeland, his country gave him a warm

welcome and a huge parade in his honor. Tragically, only a few weeks

later, his right hand, his shooting hand, was blown off in an

accident.

But this didn't stop Johann. After his body had healed, he walked out

the back door of his home one day with something stuffed under his

shirt. His wife noticed the bulge and followed him to a place where

she saw him loading a pistol, holding it between a tree and his leg.

Shot by shot, he emptied the pistol with his left hand and reloaded.

After months of this daily practice Johann became proficient. Almost

miraculously, he went to the 1960 Olympics where his determination

paid off for himself and his country as he won a second Olympic gold

medal in the pistol competition.

Isn't that a great story?

If only it were true.

When I heard this story about Johann, I was so impressed I decided to

learn more. In an Olympics book, I found, to my surprise, little of

what I had heard in the sermon was accurate. The man's name wasn't

"Johann" but Karoly Takacs. He wasn't Austrian but Hungarian. The

years he won gold medals were not 1956 and 1960 but 1948 and 1952,

years in which his country won not one gold medal but ten and sixteen,

respectively. And his right hand wasn't blown off between the Olympic

games but during World War II, after he'd won the European

championship.

I was amused after I learned the truth about "Johann," so I called the

pastor who had preached the recorded sermon and told him what I'd

discovered. After we had a good laugh, he told me he had gotten the

story from a well‑known preacher, who in turn had received the story

from a nationally known writer and pastor. Who knows how many people

have been impressed and inspired by an almost entirely fictional man

named "Johann"?

But telling half‑true or untrue stories to our congregations can

threaten our integrity. Accuracy is critical also because our

listeners will remember illustrations far longer than our sermon

points. I have created a checkup to ensure my illustrations stay

healthy.

Am I inserting myself into someone else's illustration? A cartoon

showed several church members giving three large volumes to their

pastor. The caption: "Pastor, since you've been with us for a year

now, we wanted to give you a copy of your biography that Mrs. Smedley

has put together from all that you've told us about yourself in your

sermons."

To take someone else's personal experience and make it yours is theft.

If you find someone else's good personal illustration, don't say that

it happened to you. Attribute it accurately, and it can still be

effective.

In the illustration, is someone described as "a member of my former

church"? This phrase may irritate present church members, who tire of

hearing about people in "that other church." It also broadcasts this

message: "I'm telling this story about something confidential a former

parishioner told me. If you confide in me, I may tell your story at my

next church."

Just say, "I once knew someone who "

Should this illustration be checked for accuracy? Some illustrations

are like investments: If they seem too good to be true, they probably

are.

For years I've enjoyed using an illustration about the introduction of

Coca‑Cola in Korea, to show how easily we can misunderstand one

another. I found the story in a sermon magazine, which said that when

the soft drink was first introduced, the company wanted to use Korean

letters and words which sounded as much like "Coca‑Cola" as possible,

so they used "Ko Ke Ko Le." However, sales were flat because that set

of Korean words means, "Bite the wax tadpole." So Coca‑Cola changed

the name to "Ko Kou Ko La," which means, "May the mouth rejoice," and

sales increased.

I planned to use this illustration recently, but because we have a

number of internationals as members, I decided to confirm it. When I

showed the two Coca‑Cola names to a Korean member, she informed me

that neither set of words means anything in Korean. On bottles in

Korea, "Coca‑Cola" is "Ko Ka Kol La," which means nothing but sounds

just like Coca‑Cola.

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I won't be using that one anymore.

Will this illustration be sensitive to people in the congregation?

It's simply good manners to be sensitive to gender, age, and ethnic

group. The phrase "little old lady" will turn off at least some older

women; so will "girls" when talking about women. One man in my church

told me how offended he was when he read in our local newspaper about

an "elderly man" who was listed as 65, just his age!

Will this particular congregation relate to the illustration? Do most

of your listeners read Vogue or People? Do they watch professional

wrestling or public television? Do they prefer jazz or country? Every

church is different, so some illustrations will work better than

others.

If you have a story about a king, you might make the character a CEO,

a business owner, or a union boss, if the illustration can be adapted.

Your listeners will be better able to put themselves into those

stories than stories about people from another age and setting.

Relate also to local people, events, and places when possible. For

example, if a member of your church has overcome cancer and gives

permission to use the story as a sermon illustration, that will have

great impact.

Is this illustration too detailed? Early in my preaching ministry, I

thought the only good illustration was a detailed illustration. If I

told about a day in May, I would describe the weather, the color of

flowers, how much rain had fallen during the month, and more.

What adds impact, though, are relevant details. One of my favorite

sports stories is about Glenn Cunningham, a student at the University

of Kansas who set an American record for the indoor mile run in 1932.

What makes him even more remarkable is that at age 8, his legs were so

severely burned that his doctors said he would probably never walk

again. Yet with hard work and perseverance, Cunningham became a

winner.

The details make the story better than just, "A young man once won a

record in the indoor mile run even though his legs were burned as a

child and doctors told him he might never walk." Details do have an

important place if they're the right ones and they aren't too

numerous.

Am I clearly differentiating true and imaginative stories? Sometimes

we add unsubstantiated details to true stories: "As David gathered the

stones to fling at Goliath, he gathered the smallest from the stream,

knowing that even one of these, aimed by God's unerring hand, would be

enough to knock down the giant." These kinds of details can alter a

story's substance (and make the story saccharine).

However, imagined details that don't change the substance of the story

can help listeners. I recently heard a Bible teacher tell the story of

Hosea buying back his prostitute‑wife. The only biblical description

of this incident is in - Hosea 3:2 - Hosea 3:2}?3: "So I

bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a

lethek of barley. Then I told her, 'You are to live with me many days;

you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will

live with you.'"

This teacher embellished the sparse story this way: "Imagine Gomer,

Hosea's wife, standing on the auction block, about to go to the

highest bidder. Dressed in rags. No makeup or pretty clothes to

attract men as she had done before. Looking at the crowd of bidders

and seeing the grinning faces of men who'd had her. But then among the

crowd she sees the face of her husband she'd abandoned. Imagine how

stunned she would have been to see him come for her, his rightful

wife, to buy her back with all he had. All for one woman who had

rejected him, left him, and been with her many lovers. How can he love

me so much? she must have thought."

I liked this illustration, in spite of the license the teller took

with the story. He has brought a simple transaction to life by

dramatically portraying the important sceneyet he never presented his

version of the story as if it really happened. He asked us only to

imagine his version, and that exercise painted a beautiful picture of

God's grace. [Editor's note: For an audio example of this principle

see track \_\_\_\_ on the supplemental CD]

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Homiletics: Do's and Don'ts

- 2/2009.101

Homiletics: Do's and Don'ts

DO'S

In every teaching, you should speak both as a fellow‑learner/sinner

and as a prophet. Somehow, you should communicate that you have much

to learn and a long way to go in your own walk with God. This helps

people to identify with you and is a way of communicating God's grace.

But having done this, you also need to boldly proclaim God's Word and

call on people (as God's mouthpiece) to respond to it. Your use of

personal pronouns is important in achieving this balance. "We" and "I"

are usually appropriate in speaking as a fellow‑learner. "You" is

often most appropriate in speaking as God's spokesperson. Also, you

should normally speak as a fellow‑learner before speaking as a

prophet.

Every teaching should include both indicative and imperative points.

Indicative‑only teachings tend to be theoretical and lack punch.

Imperative‑only teachings tend to be legalistic because they aren't

sufficiently grounded in God's part. If your passage contains only

indicatives or imperatives, you will need to supply the complementary

portion either by simply explaining it or by reading another passage.

Be sensitive to non‑Christians and new people. Keep them in mind

throughout your preparation primarily in the terms and examples you

use. This doesn't mean you can't talk about truths or issues that

pertain primarily to Christians; it means you should be understandable

and relevant to new people in the way you communicate your points.

Anticipate qualifications that need to be made in your teaching.

One‑sentence qualifications are often needed when making a strong

point. It is usually best to make the point strongly first and then

qualify it, rather than vice‑versa. Beware of over‑qualifying which

dilutes impact ("death by a thousand qualifications").

If you lose your train of thought during a teaching, it is usually

better to go on to the next point instead of backtracking.

Anticipate common secular objections, verbalize them and respond to

them. These make good antitheses. (EXAMPLE: "victimology" versus

- Rom. 8:28 - Romans 8:28 - - 1 Cor. 10:13 - 1

Corinthians 10:13 - - Gen. 50:20 - Genesis 50:20})

Use personal applications. This projects warmth and draws people in.

But beware of using them exclusively or even predominantly, because

your teaching will come across as self‑focused. Mix personal

applications with illustrations, contemporary antitheses, etc.

Use good illustrations, especially for abstract points. If you can't

come up with an effective original illustration, use one that is

proven.

You may use technical terms (theological, psychological, scientific,

etc.), but be sure to define them immediately.

Be yourself! God recognizes individual gifting and styles. For

example, use your own sense of humornot someone else's. On the other

hand, lean against your temperamental tendency in delivery. For

example, if you are passive, you will need to animate to the point

that you feel like you are being too extroverted.

Have good, clear thought development. Good transitions make it easier

to follow your train of thought. The best transitions are brief and

tie the next point back into the main theme.

If you do have a gospel message, explain how to become a Christian.

During this section, resist the tendency to fear boring the Christians

present. Also resist the tendency to look only at the new people.

Smile, use humor, and warm up to your audience. This helps them relax

and relate to you.

Explain the subject of your teaching early onwithin the first minute.

The proper use of slang (i.e., slang that they know and relate to)

relaxes your audience. However, the use of slang that they don't know

or relate to alienates them.

When giving the gospel, power comes from the Word. Therefore, try to

include a verse like - Revelation 3:20 - Revelation 3:20 -

- John 1:12 - John 1:12 - - Ephesians 2:8 - Ephesians

2:8}, - 9 - Ephesians 2:9 - etc.

Make use of vivid imagery and graphic description. Why say "bad" when

you can say "unacceptable" or "despicable?" Practice this when talking

with people in normal conversations.

Throughout your preparation, keep asking yourself, "What is the goal

of my teaching? What one thing do I want people to understand and do?"

When you teach Christian ethics, remember to communicate that God

gives us both the power and the motivation to do his moral will

( - Phil. 2:13 - Philippians 2:13}), and that his moral will is

for our own good ( - Deut. 10:12 - Deuteronomy

10:12}, - 13 - Deuteronomy 10:13 - - Rom.

12:2b - Romans 12:2}). These truths enable us to teach

ethics/imperatives strongly and confidentlywhich is how they should

be taughtwithout putting people under the law.

Have a concise introduction, and get into your text quickly. Once

people have already turned to the passage, they will start to read it

on their own if you don't guide them into it quickly.

Use rhetorical questions when possible.

Pause briefly after humor or important statements. This increases

impact.

Try to work from the text. Arrange your points so that you can refer

them back to the text frequently. This is a practical way of standing

on the authority of the Word. Also, it is strange to say you are

teaching a certain passage, and then not really get into that passage

seriously. If you are going to work primarily from other passages, say

this in the beginning.

DON'TS

Unless you are a very experienced teacher, don't tinker with your main

outline 24 hours prior to teaching. You'll only get more confused and

less confident.

Don't say "second Cor" or "first Thes;" say "second Corinthians," etc.

Don't refer to temperaments and other Xenos "slang." This has the

effect of alienating the new person by making them feel they are

outside an inner circle.

Don't bore people with the gospel. Be excited!

Don't have nebulous applications. They should be specific enough that

people can see clearly what it looks like to put the concept into

practice. It is better to give a very specific application and say,

"There are other ways to apply this truth," than to be overly general.

Don't have too much material. A few points that are well developed and

applied are far better than many points. Resist the urge to tell

everything you know about the passage.

Don't over use hand gestures.

Don't narrate what you went through as you prepared your teaching: "So

I wondered what this word was in the Greek . . ." Tell your audience

what you discovered, not what you went through in the process.

Don't say, "An example/illustration of this is . . . " Just give your

example/illustration.

Don't feel compelled to give the whole plan and logic of salvation

every teaching, or every time you make an evangelistic point.

Avoid using too many biblical references. This dilutes impact and

focus. It is usually better to simply refer to a passage and quote it,

than to have them turn to that passagewhich takes time and distracts

people's attention. If you decide it's necessary to turn to another

text, be sure to give clear directions on how to get there, and then

graciously give people the time to find it. Wait for the pages to stop

turning.

Avoid doing a verse‑by‑verse commentary. This dilutes impact because

there is no clear thesis with application.

Avoid overuse of application points. Don't make them the whole

teaching. You must ground your application in the theology of the

text, or it will come across legalistic.

Don't express as a personal opinion what God says in the Wordstate it

as a fact. In the same way, don't declare as authoritative what is

only your opinionsay it is your opinion.

Don't act timidly about touchy subjects (e.g., financial giving). Be

confident with God's Word in these areas.

Don't end declarative statements with a questioning tone in your

voice. This dilutes impact.

Don't mix corniness with a serious point. Comic relief may be used

after making a serious point to give people a breather, but if you get

corny while making a serious point, you dilute impact.

Don't always address the non‑Christian at the end; this is too

predictable. Christians (wrongly) will tend to lose interest at this

point, knowing that you're winding up, and thus distract the

non‑Christians.

Don't say, "I'm sure you're all familiar with this passageDate Originally Filed - octrine .

. . " New people are usually unfamiliar with the Bible, and this

comment will make them feel even more aware of and intimidated by

their ignorance.

Don't apologize for your inexperience, lack of full knowledge on a

subject, etc. This needlessly erodes your authority. Stand on the

authority of God's Word and trust it to move your audience.

Don't turn to another passage but say, "You don't need to turn there."

Either quote the passage from memory, or let them turn to it with you.

Saying "You don't need to turn there" sounds like you have something

to hide.

\webpage{http://www.xenos.org/classes/homiletics/tips.htm

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Preachers - John Knox

- 1/2007.101

John Knox never entered a pulpit until he was 40 years old and

biographers conclude that much of the fire and energy of his preaching

was due to the fact that the flame had been so long pent up within his

breast.

- - - 1 Pet 1:2 - 1 Peter 1:2

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How to Use Other Preachers' Material Without Compromising Your Integrity by Brian Mavis

- 2/2009.101

"All work and no plagiarism makes for dull sermons!" Henry Ward Beecher

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they

succeed." - Proverbs 15:22 - Proverbs 15:22

Is Using Other Preachers' Sermons OK?

Have you ever wondered if researching other preachers' sermons for

your own sermon preparation was wrong? What about reading or listening

to just one other preacher's sermon? Or what if you used someone's

outline, or main idea, or illustrationsor even most of someone else's

sermon? Where is the line, and have you ever wondered if you crossed

it?

Even people who think that they are being completely original are

probably not quite right. Some copy ideas without even knowing it.

Rick Warren (a very copied preacher) is known for saying, "If you take

an idea from one person it is called plagiarism. If you take ideas

from a number of people it is called research." Ironically, even that

was said before by US playwright Wilson Mizner (1876‑1933). He said,

"Copy from one, it's plagiarism; copy from two, it's research." John

F. Kennedy is credited for saying, "Ask not what your country can do

for youask what you can do for your country." But it was really his

ghostwriter, John Kenneth Galbraith, who wrote it. And Galbraith may

have lifted the idea from Oliver Wendell Holmes who said, "We...

recall what our country has done for each of us, and to ask ourselves

what we can do for our country in return."

As the manager of the largest sermon resource site on the Internet, I

deal with the pros and cons of using material from other pastor's

sermons on a daily basis. I get emails worldwide from pastors saying

how reading other pastors' sermons has helped them as a person and as

a preacher. But occasionally I uncover someone who has submitted a

plagiarized sermon and is probably preaching it as if they wrote it.

Relying on Other Preachers' Sermons is Common

Researching other preachers' sermons is not new. Sermons have been

printed in books for centuries, and sermons on tapes have been

abundant for decades. But with the advent of the Internet, researching

and copying other preachers' sermons is easier and more common than

ever. Last week SermonCentral was used over 170,000 times. It is the

most popular online sermon resource site, but it certainly isn't the

only one. Just that fact alone proves there are a lot of pastors

looking for sermon help.

Advantages of Sermon Resource Sites

There are different reasons preachers rely on other people's

sermonssome good, some bad. Some benefits of sermon resource sites

are:

1. They can help you write a better sermon, which can lead more people

to know and grow in Christ.

2. They can give you other perspectives and help you grow in your

knowledge of God.

3. They can give you the benefit of other pastors' research and

resources.

4. They can help you save time.

5. They can help you with better big ideas, outlines and

illustrations.

Disadvantages of Sermon Resource Sites

Some detriments of sermon resource sites are:

1. They can lead to laziness.

2. They can shortchange your personal conviction that comes with

struggling over a passage.

3. They can prevent you from taking into account your congregation's

need, which produces generic sermons.

4. They can tempt you to take false credit for a sermon. Because

reading, listening, researching, and relying on other preachers'

sermons is so widespread, and because it has potential for such great

benefit or detriment, it is important to do it right and for the right

reasons.

What Not To Do

1. Don't wait until Saturday to begin your sermon preparation.

(Preparing a good sermon is like brewing good coffeeit needs time to

percolate.)

2. Don't go to a sermon resource site and just print off a sermon and

read it.

3. Don't retell a story as if it happened to you.

What To Do

1. First, go to God and ask Him what He wants to say to your

congregation.

2. Study the Bible passage on your own before you rely on someone

else's study.

3. Apply the passage to your lifewalk what you are going to talk.

4. With the passage in your heart, and your congregation in mind,

discern the main thing (just one thing) you want to say and how you

want to say it.

5. Now you can look at other sources. Be open to any better ideas,

clearer ways to say things, missed points, and superior illustrations.

6. In your personal notes, cite your sources.

7. When you go to preach, reference your resources. If you just have

some common illustrations, ideas, or quotes, there is no need to

clutter your sermon with, "I got this information from..." But if you

have used a significant idea, outline, illustration, or section (and

even an entire sermon), give credit where credit is due. You can

either mention something before the sermon or in the midst of it. You

can also handle this by placing a note in the bulletin. For example

you can say something like, "In my research for this sermon, I used

Chuck Swindoll's outline from his sermon called God is Good."

The widespread use of gleaning from other people's sermons is here to

stay. The goal is to use the resource wisely and well. To cheat your

congregation by overusing sermon resources is wrong. But it can be

equally as wrong to avoid using them because of pride, and possibly

cheat your congregation out of a better message. The Good News

combined with good resources is a powerful combination for reaching

your congregation and community for Christ.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/copy\_it\_right.asp

February 17, 2009

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Preaching Magazine Online ‑ www.preaching.com ‑ websites - 3/2009.101

Check out these other websites for useful resources on preaching and culture.

Preaching Magazine Online ‑ www.preaching.com ‑ Features and sermon

ideas based on material from Preachingmagazine. A certain level of

info is available for free. Full access to the site is by

subscription.

Preach By Ear ‑ www.preachbyear.com ‑ Offering Dave McClellans

insights into the skill of preaching without notes. The site features

video instruction and an opportunity to purchase the Preach By Ear

instructional DVD.

Evangelical Homiletics Society ‑ www.ehomiletics.com ‑ The website of

the E.H.S., an organization of professional homileticians dedicated to

the advancement of the cause of biblical preaching.

The Academy of Homiletics ‑ www.homiletics.org ‑ The website of the

Academy of Homiletics, another organization of professional

homileticians, perhaps more from the mainline side of Protestant

Christianity.

Passion for Preaching ‑ www.passionforpreaching.com ‑ A European

community of biblical preachers. Designed to help you effectively

communicate the Word of God.

Leadership Journal ‑ www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/ ‑ Leadership

offers the help you need to enrich, expand, and strengthen your

ministry. Renew your energy for ministry with Leadership's credible

solutions, innovative ideas, and compelling challenges.

Preaching Today ‑ www.preachingtoday.com ‑ Helping preachers add power

to their messages with fresh illustrations, quotes and anecdotes. The

site has several thousand pieces available. Subscription required for

full access.

The Biblical Theology Briefings ‑ www.beginningwithmoses.org ‑

Modelling the major difference that biblical theology can make to

preaching, this is very helpful site encouraging preaching that does

not moralize, allegorize, or spiritualize.

PreachingPlus ‑ www.preachingplus.com ‑ Featuring images,

illustrations and sermons by people like Len Sweet and others.

Sermon Audio ‑ www.sermonaudio.com ‑ Listen to sermons in real time or

upload your own sermons for others to hear.

The Ooze ‑ www.theooze.com ‑ Christian community with a postmodern

flavor. Plenty of insightful articles on the future of the church.

Pastors.com ‑ www.pastors.com ‑ Full feature site from Pastor Rick

Warren of Saddleback Church. Access to Rick's vast archive of sermon

outlines (and more) requires a subscription.

Grace Centered ‑ www.gracecentered.com ‑ A full‑service Christian

portal for preachers, featuring news, opinion, bible study tools,

movie reviews, and other useful features.

Homiletics Online ‑ www.homileticsonline.com ‑ A subscription service

offering sermon helps for preachers.

Postmodern Preaching ‑ www.postmodernpreaching.net ‑ A series of

articles on the subject of preaching in postmodern times.

Sermon Central ‑ www.sermoncentral.com ‑ 35,000 sermons,

illustrations, and outlines.

Leonard Sweet ‑ www.leonardsweet.com ‑ A portal to all things Len. A

cornucopia of ideas from the guru of Christian postmodernity.

Today's Preacher ‑ www.todayspreacher.faithsite.com ‑ A place to

consider the challenge of preaching in contemporary life.

From ‑ \webpage{http://www.preaching.org/links

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Connect Hearers Through Dialogue - a Two‑way Street Can Be Paved with Gold - Jeffrey D. Arthurs

- 3/2009.101

Connect Hearers through Dialogue

A two‑way street can be paved with gold.

Jeffrey D. Arthurs

Preaching has a long tradition of one‑way communication. You may want

to consider experimenting, though, with another alternative well

suited to our culture: dialogue. Here are several reasons to consider

using two‑way communication with your congregation:

Biblical preachers used dialogue.

When Jesus taught, he rarely depended on monologue. The New Testament

records that he asked 153 questions. "Whose likeness is on this coin"

( - Matthew 22:20 - Matthew 22:20 - - Mark 12:16 - Mark

12:16 - - Luke 20:24 - Luke 20:24})? "Which one was this man's

neighbor" ( - Luke 10:36 - Luke 10:36})? Jesus, the Master

Teacher, engaged in dialogue.

Paul also used dialogue.

In Acts, Luke uses the term dialegomai at least ten times to

characterize Paul's communication. The term means "to discuss, to

reason, to argue." Paul "reasoned with them from the Scriptures"

( - Acts 17:2 - Acts 17:2}). "He reasoned in the synagogue as

well as the marketplace day by day" ( - Acts 17:17 - Acts

17:17}). He "argued persuasively about the kingdom" ( - Acts

19:8 - Acts 19:8}). Apparently Paul felt it was wise for a herald to

engage in dialogue.

Some entire books of the Bible are structured by dialogue. Malachi

used rhetorical questions, a cousin of two‑way communication, to great

effect.

We have differing fields of experience.

Listeners hear the preacher's words through their own "grid." For

communication to occur, senders and receivers must dance an intricate

mental dance to construct meaning.

Max Warren calls this dance "quadruple‑think." He says,

"Quadruple‑thinking is thinking out what I have to say, then thinking

out how the other man will understand what I say, and then rethinking

what I have to say, so that, when I say it, he will think what I am

thinking." Dialogue is indispensable to communicators committed to

quadruple‑think.

We live in a democratic and pluralistic society.

Americans value free expression and believe all men are created equal.

Every person has a right to hold and express his or her opinion. In

this culture, preachers will want to avoid giving the impression of

lording it over their listeners.

Many Ways to Dialogue

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There are various ways to introduce more two‑way communication into

your sermon. Each preaching situation has its own rules. Preachers who

want to try something new need to be brave souls, but maybe one or two

of these suggestions will work in your church.

Question and answeraudience to preacher

Speakers often use this method following a message, but we can also

allow people to ask questions within a sermon. You may want to use

wording like this to prompt feedback: "Have I made that clear?" or

"Can I clarify anything?" This puts the responsibility for clarity on

the preacher so listeners don't feel stupid for asking.

Question and answerpreacher to audience

We can ask the congregation either closed or open questions. For

example, to focus the audience's attention the preacher could ask a

closed question: "What is the Great Commission?" Open questions are

even more potent, as when Jesus asked, "Who do men say that I am"

( - Matthew 16:13 - Matthew 16:13 - - Mark 8:27 - Mark

8:27})? To teach like Jesus, we might ask a series of questions: "What

are people most afraid of? What are you most afraid of? What place

does prayer have in your struggle against fear?"

Rhetorical questions

These are simple to use and can be as effective as "real" dialogue.

They engage the audience in mental dialogue with the preacher.

Interviews

Before, after, or even in the middle of a message, why not bring

forward a person with firsthand experience in the subject of the

message to reinforce the point? Either the audience or the preacher

could question the person.

Testimony

Listeners participate vicariously in the ideas and emotions of

personal stories. Try following your sermon with a story from someone

who has "been there, done that." Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback

Community Church, uses testimony every week to increase the impact of

his messages.

Role play and drama

This method also creates identification. As a twist on the typical use

of drama, I wove a sequence of scenes into a sermon called "A Day in

the Life of a Christian." This sermon was designed to show seekers

what it was like to be a Christian. The sermon began with a normal

introduction but then introduced an actress called Jill Christian. I

asked if the audience could accompany her through her day, and as she

encountered various trials and triumphs, we dialogued, or I commented

directly to the audience on what had just occurred.

Dialogue‑based sermon structure

The outline of a sermon can take the shape of questions and answers.

Anticipating listeners' questions as you teach on baptism, you might

use this outline:

‑What does baptism mean?

‑Who should be baptized?

‑What does baptism do?

‑How should baptism be done?

Presermon feedforward

Dallas Seminary preaching professor Keith Willhite urges, "Stop

preaching in the dark! Gaining feedback isn't enough." Try to gather

people's ideas and experiences before you preach and use them in

sermon preparation.

Postsermon feedback

Feedback can show preachers where further teaching is needed.

(Warning: you have to be humble to listen to most people's comments.

Or it will make you humble!)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "It is characteristic of the preacher that

he simultaneously questions and proclaims. He must ask along with the

congregation, and form a 'Socratic community'otherwise he could not

give any reply. But he can reply and he must, because he knows God's

answer in Christ."

I think you will find that encouraging more two‑way communication in

your preaching will invigorate you, your church community, and your

sermons.

Jeffrey Arthurs is associate professor of communication/homiletics at

Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary in Portland, Oregon.

http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/liap.html

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12 Ways to Discover Calling by Patrick Morley

- 3/2009.101

12 ways to Discover Calling

Twelve Suggestions to Help Discover Your Calling

by Patrick Morley

Adapted from The Seven Seasons of a Man's Life (Zondervan)

Once that fire to serve the Lord starts to burn in our hearts, we bump

up against some obvious questions:

I want to serve the Lord, but what can I do?

Wouldn't I have to be a full‑time minister to serve the Lord?

What kind of personal ministry can I do?

Is my work part of my calling?

Why is it taking so long to get in gear?

What is God's will for my life?

Let's explore the answers to these important questions.

What The Bible Says

The Bible offers a comprehensive overview of our call to serve. This

snapshot will give you a firm base upon which to build your own

personal calling.

God Made Us To Serve Him: "For we are God's workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus to do good works" ( - Ephesians 2:10 - Ephesians

2:10}).

God Has Already Determined What He Wants Us To Do: "good works which

God prepared in advance for us to do" ( - Ephesians

2:10 - Ephesians 2:10}).

God Wants Each Of Us To Bear Much Fruit: "This is to my Father's

glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my

disciples" ( - John 15:8 - John 15:8}). In fact, fruit proves

we are His disciples.

To Bear Fruit God Gives Each Of Us Different Spiritual Gifts: "We have

different gifts, according to the grace given us" ( - Romans

12:6 - Romans 12:6}). Spiritual gifts are unique spiritual abilities

given by God to help us in serving Him. (For a full discussion of this

topic see my book, The Rest Of Your Life, "Chapter Eighteen,

Developing a Personal Ministry".)

Some Are Called To Speak, Some To Serve, Some To Both: "If anyone

speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If

anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides"

( - 1 Peter 4:11 - 1 Peter 4:11}).

We Each Serve God As Part Of A Larger Body: "Just as each of us has

one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same

function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member

belongs to all the others" ( - Romans 12:4‑5 - Romans 12:4‑5}).

All of us working together form a beautiful mosaic of loving service.

The Ultimate Purpose Of Our Service Is To Bring Glory To God: "so

that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be

the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" ( - 1 Peter

4:11 - 1 Peter 4:11}).

The Nature Of The Call To Service

The Bible makes no distinction between sacred and secular. For the

Christian, all of life is "spiritual." Francis Schaeffer put it this

way:

One thing you should very definitely have in mind ‑ that is that a

ministry such as teaching the Bible in a college is no higher calling

intrinsically than being a businessman or doing something else.

Many people who sense the desire to serve God welling up within them

assume they must now do something else. This is rarely the case. For

99% of us, God probably wants us right where we are (see - 1

Corinthians 7:17 - 1 Corinthians 7:17}, - 20 - 1 Corinthians

7:20}, - 24 - 1 Corinthians 7:24}). Generally, we should keep

doing what we already do, but differently ‑ with a whole new

orientation to pleasing Christ.

The call to service develops in three phases: calling, equipping, and

sending. When God "calls" He rarely "sends" right away. Instead, we

usually go through a season of "equipping" when we encounter delays,

uncertainties, and hardships. God uses these times to work some things

"into" our lives and some things "out of" our lives.

Twelve Suggestions to Help Discover Your Calling

Use the following suggestions to help you clarify God's calling on

your life, including both your work and personal ministry.

1. Employ the Means of Guidance. To help us discern His will, God has

given seven means of guidance: The Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit,

conscience, circumstances, counsel, and fasting. Use these with

liberality, keeping the question before you, "God, what is your

calling for my life?"

2. Discover Your Spiritual Gifts. Make the effort to learn your

spiritual gifts. This will help you discern your direction as much as

any single thing. Your church may offer training in spiritual gifts.

Ask your pastor. Also, check with your local Christian bookstore for

books and other resources. A previous A Look In The Mirror is entitled

"How to Determine Your Spiritual Gifts" which you can order from us.

Knowing your gifts will help you in your work as well as personal

ministry. For example, a man with the gifts of leadership and faith

may be suited to own his own business.

3. Identify Your Motivated Interests. - Philippians

2:13 - Philippians 2:13} says, "For it is God who works in you to will

and to act according to His good purpose." In other words, God puts

desires into our hearts to do His work. Pay attention to your desires.

Pray over them and see if your motives are pure. Discovering your

motivated interests can help you direct career choices as well as

choose personal ministry opportunities.

4. Complete Your Written Life Purpose Statement. To understand God's

larger purpose for your life is to know why you are here and what your

life is about. Develop a written life purpose statement of one or two

sentences. Base it upon a Scripture verse if possible. (For a fuller

treatment of this topic see my book, The Man In The Mirror, page 68.)

5. Keep a Journal. Consider keeping a journal of Scriptures that touch

you, impressions you have, your concerns, and new insights you learn

about yourself, God, and His calling. Look for patterns of interest or

concern.

6. Keep Driving Toward the Vision. Vision is a mental picture of a

desirable future. Eventually, God will give you a picture of what He

wants you to do. This may be more or less clear. The key is to always

keep driving toward the vision, even if you must drive slow because

you are in a fog. Act in light of what you do know. Don't not act in

light of what you don't know.

7. What to Do When Strategy Is Unclear. God has given me a vision: "To

help bring about a spiritual awakening in America by reaching the men

and leaders of our nation for Christ." The picture is a spiritually

awakened nation. Yet, the precise strategies for my part are not

completely clear. So, I continue to seek to be faithful to what God

has already shown, and vigilant for more clarity as I keep moving with

what is already clear.

8. Reorganize Work Life to Allow for Personal Ministry. Jim refused a

promotion because it would put him on the road four days a week. Lin

quit a position because his boss wanted him to work seven days a week.

He found a job selling lights bulbs with 1,325 established accounts

that required a normal 40 hour week. Don't be so bogged down in work

that you never have time to serve the Lord in other ministry

capacities besides your work.

9. Employ the Power of Faith. After winning the U.S. Open and

Wimbledon, #1 ranked tennis pro, Pete Sampras, was asked if he thought

he could win the Grand Slam (the four major international tennis

tournaments) like his hero Rod Laver did in 1968. No one since Laver

has won it. He answered, "No." That pretty well sealed his fate. The

negative power of disbelief cripples your vision. But the power of

belief or faith is enormous. Faith is not mere positive thinking;

faith is believing God in the face of unbelievable circumstances. It

is trusting that what God puts in your heart as "desire" is within His

power to bring about.

10. Maintain Priorities. Regardless of what specific ministry or

occupation God gives us, we all have inescapable priorities which we

must not neglect. For example, our mates, children, walk with Christ,

personal finances, rest, exercise, and work. We must take

responsibility for our own private lives.

11. Expect Opposition. Live your life in light of the vision God has

given you. Don't let opposition deter you. God gave Nehemiah a vision

to rebuild his city, but he encountered stiff opposition.

- Nehemiah 4:9 - Nehemiah 4:9} says, "We prayed to our God and

posted a guard day and night to meet this threat." In other words,

praise the Lord and pass the ammunition! In the end, God fulfilled the

vision He put in Nehemiah's heart, a vision that appeared dead.

12. Be Willing to Take Some Risks. After an invigorating discussion on

calling, equipping, and sending, a man said with tears in his eyes,

"But I'm just not feeling called." The counsel to this man, who at the

time was not serving the Lord at all, was, "Do something." Many men

never attempt anything significant because they might fail. They would

rather be perfect in potentiality than imperfect in actuality.

Application

Do you know what God is calling you to do? If you are still trying to

discover His calling, why not take a few moments right now or during

your next quiet time and review each of these twelve suggestions

carefully. Ask yourself how you can employ each suggestion to help you

discover His good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life.

\webpage{http://www.maninthemirror.org/alm/alm6.htm

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10 Tips for a Great Presentation

- 3/2009.101

Connecting with an audience, communicating your vision and passion for

your message, can be a beautiful experience. It's also a rare

opportunity to make an impression that might impact the listener's

future. It can either be a gateway or a roadblock to spiritual growth.

Remember these tips:

The pitch. Start with your main point of view and a handful of

take‑aways. Then build a storyboard around that, one slide per

thought. Keep the number of slides down and allow only a few minutes

per slide..

The icebreaker. Start with something to break the tension (yours and

theirs): a welcome gesture, engaging or humorous anecdote, graphic or

video, or some combination. Keep it relevant and appropriate. Don't

tell a joke.

The old axiom. Old advice, but it works: First tell the audience what

you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you

told them.

Don't always read what's on the slide. Use the slides for brief cues

and speak in your own words.

Engage the audience. Ask questions. If they don't respond, try

offering an answer and asking for a show of hands, or ask easier

questions. Make the audience part of the experience.

Be accessible. Don't stand behind a podium. Use a wireless mic, if

needed. Get close to the audience and move from place to place while

maintaining eye‑contact, but only from time to time. Do not bounce

around like a ping‑pong ball.

Pause for effect and emphasis. Practice being comfortable with silence

for two or three seconds. It's the most dramatic way to make a point.

Avoid "verbal static" like ahs, uhs, and other fillers of

uncomfortable silence; they just detract from your presence.

Make eye‑contact. But only for a few seconds per person. Too short and

you'll fail to engage; too long and it becomes uncomfortable.

Use hand gestures. They're engaging and interesting. But when you're

not using them, keep your hands at your sides. Don't fidget, hold onto

things, or put your hands in front of you, behind you, or in your

pockets. Have a trusted friend observe your rehearsal to point out

nervous habits.

Don't block the audience's view. Don't step in front of the screen or

block it from view, except for the occasional walk‑across. Gesture

with your hand, but don't touch the screen. Don't use a pointer unless

you must.

Remember, you weren't born with this ability; it takes practice. Be

patient with yourself. Finding your own style where you feel

comfortable comes with experience.

Adapted from Steve Tobak, bNet, 12/22/08

03.04.09 Church Leaders Intelligence Report

ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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Adapted from Steve Tobak, bNet, 12/22/08

03.04.09 Church Leaders Intelligence Report

ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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Podcasts Filling Desires to Hear Sermons

- 11/2009.101

Not everyone can make it to church every Sunday. People get sick,

travel or are deployed far away from their hometowns. But whether in

the Middle East or in a small town in Maryland, many local people can

listen to Sunday services using the Internet and podcasts, a video and

audio digital media that can be downloaded to computers and media

players from church Web sites. Online podcast directories now make it

easy for believers all over the world to find and listen to even the

smallest church's podcast. Pastor Tom Albright from Marysville United

Methodist Church started podcasting two years ago. A friend of

Albright's was going to work in Italy, and he wanted to listen to

Albright's sermons while he was gone. Marysville staff had recorded

sermons on cassette for those who wanted to hear them, sometimes for

the second time, but the podcasts have replaced that method of

recording, said Albright. People, whether part of the 700‑member

church or not, can watch and listen to scripture and Albright's

sermon. "Technically it's very simple and probably takes me only about

15 minutes a week," said Albright. Another small church in Everett

said its first podcast resulted in "a couple of hundred downloads

within the first week," even without publicizing them. The pastor even

said, "The video podcast of services is downloaded four times more

than the audionow if we straggle behind, (those downloading) get

upset with us."

HeraldNet 3/28/09

04.22.09 Church Leaders Intelligence Report

ChurchLeaders@nc.churchleaders.com

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Good Youth Teaching is... Ron Jackson

- 7/2006.101

Good Youth Teaching is... Ron Jackson

In his classic work on education To Know as We are Known, Parker J.

Palmer re‑tells the story of Abba Felix. Abba Felix was one of the

fourth‑century desert fathers. As was the custom of the time, some

brothers went to see Abba Felix in the desert and "begged him to say a

word to them."

I see a similar picture in my mind of a group of young people climbing

up a mountain to see a holy man and asking about the meaning of life.

However, in this story instead of giving the young men an answer, Abba

Felix is silent. The young men wait but after a while Abba Felix

breaks the silence and answers their question with one of his own.

"You wish to hear a word?"

"Yes, Abba," the young men said.

"There are no more words nowadays," Abba Felix replies.

He then goes on to explain that in the past when the old men spoke a

word, that word was listened to. People did what the old men and women

said. But now since the young men "ask without doing, the old men do

not find anything to say." Hearing this reply the brothers groaned,

and said "Pray for us Abba."1

Several things about teaching come to my mind after hearing this

story...

Good teaching doesn't always give an answer

At least not a single answer. This is perhaps why narrative is such a

great teacher. Stories aren't always clean. Many Bible stories are

messy. They don't have a clean outcome, they end abruptly, and most of

them don't say a word about how we are to interpret or apply them.

When we tell these stories to children we tend to clean them up a bit,

and we should. However, for our youth and college students we need to

re‑tell these stories and not leave out the messy parts. Life is

messy; it doesn't always end nicely. Fairy tales do, but not life. We

need to allow the stories of scripture to speak for themselves, and we

must resist the temptation to give only one meaning or interpretation

to the story. This lack of single meaning doesn't only apply to

biblical stories. Look at the story of Abba Felix. It leaves one with

almost as many questions as answers.

Good teaching is comfortable with tension

My students get so uptight when someone asks me a tough question. I

love the tension. I get excited when something I've said is

challenged, especially when I perceive that the person asking the

question is honestly seeking. Answering tough questions can be

stressful. A lot hangs on the answer; however, good teaching doesn't

have to have all the answers (Yes, you read that right ‑ good teaching

is not about having all the right answers!). Good teaching requires

leaders and a people who are comfortable with a certain amount of

anxiety. Being comfortable with tension frees us from always having to

be right. There is mystery and wonder associated with our faith, and

for too long youth workers have been more "Bible Answer Men" than

fellow travelers on the highway of faith.

In speaking of our knowledge of God, John Chrysostom said, "Whatever

knowledge we may have, it is still imperfect. How is it that some

people claim to have a full and precise knowledge of God? Where God is

concerned, we cannot even say just how wrong our perception of Him

is."2

Good teaching happens in a safe place

Our youth groups, Bible studies, and small groups need to be places

where students feel safe. Not only physically safe ‑ although that is

important ‑ but we need to create teaching environments that are

emotional harbors which allow our youth to express themselves in

non‑judgmental or hyper‑critical ways.

Good teaching occurs in community

"The authority of scripture derives its intelligibility from the

existence of a community that knows its life depends on faithful

remembering of God's care of His creation thought the calling of

Israel and the life of Jesus."3

Discipleship is truly a communal activity. For too long we have made

it an activity of an individual. As much as conservative America hates

to admit it, Hillary Clinton is right ‑ it does indeed take a village.

Good teaching creates a place where Truth is practiced

To teach, Parker Palmer says, is to "create a space in which obedience

to truth is practiced."4 Good teaching pays attention to truth. I'm

not just talking about propositional truth, but personal/relational

Truth as well. Propositional truth is important. Good teachers pay

close attention to propositional truth. However, personal/relational

truth is what good Christian teaching should be after. Our goal is not

to fill our students' minds with information, but to create an

environment where they can meet and have an encounter with Jesus

Christ.

In Finding God at Harvard, Kelly Monroe writes about the Harvard

shield. Anyone who has ever seen a Harvard T‑shirt, ball cap or

notebook has seen that shield. The shield has a Latin word on it,

VERITAS. VERITAS is Harvard's Motto. VERITAS is Latin for truth. In

1646 when the motto was adopted, Truth was understood to be not simply

facts and figures, VERITAS was also a person. That person was Jesus.5

Good teaching not only passes on propositional truth but creates a

place where students can meet and have relationship with the Truth,

Jesus!

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‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑‑

1 Parker J. Palmer. To Know as We are Known: A Spirituality of

Education.

(Harper: San Francisco 1993) pg. 41

2 John Chrysostom. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians

20.3

(NPNS 1 12:112)

3 Stanley Hauerwas. A Community of Character

(University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame 1981) pg. 53

4 Parker pg. 69

5 Kelly Monroe. Finding God at Harvard.

(Zondervan: Grand Rapids 1976) pg 14

Subj: Crosswalk Pastors Resource

Date: 7/31/2006 9:38:02 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Crosswalk\_Pastors\_Resources@crosswalkmail.com

Reply‑to: jkawkjwxaspcv@crosswalkmail.com

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Dakes Preaching Note from Mark 16:15

- 5/2010.101

Dakes Note from - Mark 16:15 - Mark 16:15

New Testament Program

1. Preach the gospel. The word preach is used 50 times; preached 61

times; preaching 27 times; preacheth 3 times; preachest 1 time; and

preacher 11 times.

2. Confirm the gospel. Many Scriptures teach the confirmation of what

is preached ( - Matthew 4:23‑24 - Matthew 4:23‑24 -

- Matthew 9:35 - Matthew 9:35}, notes; - Matthew

10:1‑8 - Matthew 10:1‑8 - - Matthew 11:4‑5 - Matthew 11:4‑5 -

- Matthew 28:20 - Matthew 28:20 - - Mark 1:39 - Mark

1:39 - - Mark 3:14‑15 - Mark 3:14‑15 - - Mark

16:15‑20 - Mark 16:15‑20 - - Luke 4:18 - Luke 4:18 -

- Luke 9:6 - Luke 9:6 - - Acts 1:1‑8 - Acts 1:1‑8 -

- Acts 6:1‑8 - Acts 6:1‑8 - - Hebrews 2:3‑4 - Hebrews

2:3‑4 - etc.).

Seven Classes to Preach To:

1. The poor ( - Luke 4:18 - Luke 4:18 - - Luke

7:22 - Luke 7:22})

2. Captives to Satan ( - Luke 4:18 - Luke 4:18})

3. Jews ( - Acts 11:19‑20 - Acts 11:19‑20})

4. Gentiles ( - Galatians 2:2 - Galatians 2:2 -

- Ephes. 3:8 - Ephesians 3:8})

5. Heathen ( - Galatians 1:16 - Galatians 1:16})

6. Those who dwell on earth ( - Rev. 14:6 - Revelation 14:6})

7. Every creature ( - Mark 16:15 - Mark 16:15})

Seven Places to Preach:

1. All the world ( - Matthew 24:14 - Matthew 24:14 -

- Mark 16 - Mark 16})

2. Everywhere ( - Acts 8:4 - Acts 8:4})

3. In cities ( - Matthew 11:1 - Matthew 11:1 - - Acts

8:40 - Acts 8:40})

4. In towns ( - Mark 1:38 - Mark 1:38})

5. In synagogues ( - Mark 1:39 - Mark 1:39 - - Luke

4:44 - Luke 4:44})

6. Upon housetops ( - Matthew 10:27 - Matthew 10:27})

7. Regions beyond ( - 2 Cor. 10:16 - 2 Corinthians 10:16})

Seven Contrasting Ways to Preach:

1. Not in envy and strife, but in love and good will ( - Phil.

1:15‑17 - Philippians 1:15‑17})

2. Not in hypocrisy and fallacy, but in sincerity and truth

( - Phil. 1:18 - Philippians 1:18})

3. Not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in power ( - 1

Cor. 2:1‑5 - 1 Corinthians 2:1‑5})

4. Not in a compromising, man‑pleasing spirit, but in all boldness and

zeal for truth ( - Phil. 1:14 - Philippians 1:14 -

- Acts 9:27 - Acts 9:27})

5. Not in doubt and unbelief, but in sobriety and faith ( - 1

Tim. 4:6‑16 - 1 Timothy 4:6‑16 - - 1 Peter 5:1‑10 - 1 Peter

5:1‑10})

6. Not with respect of persons as men pleasers but as servants of God

( - Matthew 22:16 - Matthew 22:16 - - Ephes.

6:6 - Ephesians 6:6 - - Galatians 1:10 - Galatians 1:10})

7. Not partially, but fully preach the gospel ( - Romans

15:19 - Romans 15:19}, - 29 - Romans 15:29})

Five Things not to preach:

1. Circumcision ( - Galatians 5:11 - Galatians 5:11})

2. The law of Moses ( - Acts 15:21 - Acts 15:21})

3. Self ( - 2 Cor. 4:5 - 2 Corinthians 4:5})

4. Any other gospel ( - Galatians 1:8‑9 - Galatians 1:8‑9})

5. Any other Jesus ( - 2 Cor. 11:4 - 2 Corinthians 11:4})

Thirty Things to Preach:

1. Good tidings ( - Isaiah 61:1 - Isaiah 61:1 - - Luke

4:18 - Luke 4:18})

2. The kingdom of heaven ( - Matthew 4:17 - Matthew 4:17 -

- Matthew 9:35 - Matthew 9:35 - - Matthew

10:7 - Matthew 10:7 - - Matthew 24:14 - Matthew 24:14 -

- Mark 1:14 - Mark 1:14})

3. The kingdom of God ( - Luke 4:43 - Luke 4:43 -

- Luke 9:2 - Luke 9:2}, - 60 - Luke 9:60 -

- Luke 16:16 - Luke 16:16 - - Acts 8:12 - Acts 8:12 -

- Acts 20:25 - Acts 20:25 - - Acts 28:31 - Acts

28:31})

4. Repentance ( - Matthew 3:1‑2 - Matthew 3:1‑2 -

- Luke 24:47 - Luke 24:47})

5. Water baptism ( - Mark 1:4 - Mark 1:4 - - Luke

3:3 - Luke 3:3})

6. Spirit baptism ( - Mark 1:7‑8 - Mark 1:7‑8 - - Luke

3:16 - Luke 3:16 - - John 1:33 - John 1:33 - - John

7:37‑39 - John 7:37‑39 - - Acts 1:4‑8 - Acts 1:4‑8 -

- Acts 2:33 - Acts 2:33}, - 38‑39 - Acts 2:38‑39 -

- Acts 5:32 - Acts 5:32 - - Galatians

3:13‑14 - Galatians 3:13‑14})

7. The gospel ( - Matthew 11:5 - Matthew 11:5 - - Luke

4:18 - Luke 4:18 - - Luke 20:1 - Luke 20:1 - - Acts

8:25 - Acts 8:25 - - Acts 14:7 - Acts 14:7}, - 21 - Acts

14:21 - - Acts 16:10 - Acts 16:10 - - Romans

1:15‑16 - Romans 1:15‑16 - - Romans 15:20 - Romans 15:20 -

- 1 Cor. 1:17 - 1 Corinthians 1:17 - - 1 Cor. 15:1 - 1

Corinthians 15:1 - - 2 Cor. 10:16 - 2 Corinthians 10:16 -

- Galatians 2:2 - Galatians 2:2 - - Galatians

3:8 - Galatians 3:8 - - Galatians 4:13 - Galatians 4:13 -

- Hebrews 4:2 - Hebrews 4:2 - - 1 Peter 1:12 - 1 Peter

1:12}, - 25 - 1 Peter 1:25 - - 1 Peter 4:6 - 1 Peter

4:6})

8. The gospel of peace ( - Romans 10:15 - Romans 10:15})

9. The gospel of Christ ( - Romans 15:19 - Romans 15:19})

10.The gospel of God ( - Romans 1:1 - Romans 1:1 - - 2

Cor. 11:7 - 2 Corinthians 11:7 - - 1 Thes. 2:9 - 1

Thessalonians 2:9})

11. The everlasting gospel ( - Rev. 14:6 - Revelation 14:6})

12. The Word ( - Mark 2:2 - Mark 2:2 - - Acts

8:4 - Acts 8:4}, - 25 - Acts 8:25 - - Acts 14:25 - Acts

14:25 - - Acts 15:36 - Acts 15:36 - - Acts 16:6 - Acts

16:6 - - 2 Tim. 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2 - - Hebrews

4:2 - Hebrews 4:2})

13. The Word of faith ( - Romans 10:8‑17 - Romans 10:8‑17})

14. The Word of God ( - Acts 13:5 - Acts 13:5 - - Acts

17:13 - Acts 17:13})

15. The Word of the Lord ( - Acts 15:35 - Acts 15:35})

16. Jesus Christ ( - Acts 3:20 - Acts 3:20 - - Acts

5:42 - Acts 5:42 - - Acts 8:5 - Acts 8:5}, - 35 - Acts

8:35 - - Acts 9:20 - Acts 9:20 - - Acts

10:42‑43 - Acts 10:42‑43 - - Acts 17:3 - Acts

17:3}, - 18 - Acts 17:18 - - 2 Cor. 1:19 - 2

Corinthians 1:19 - - 2 Cor. 4:5 - 2 Corinthians 4:5 -

- Galatians 1:16 - Galatians 1:16})

17. Christ crucified ( - 1 Cor. 1:23 - 1 Corinthians 1:23 -

- 1 Cor. 2:2 - 1 Corinthians 2:2})

18. The cross ( - 1 Cor. 1:18 - 1 Corinthians

1:18}, - 21 - 1 Corinthians 1:21})

19. The acceptable year of the Lord ( - Luke 4:18 - Luke 4:18 -

- Isaiah 61:1‑2 - Isaiah 61:1‑2})

20.The unsearchable riches of Christ ( - Ephes. 3:8 - Ephesians

3:8})

21. Deliverance ( - Luke 4:18 - Luke 4:18 - - Isaiah

61:1 - Isaiah 61:1})

22. Reconciliation ( - Acts 14:15 - Acts 14:15 - - 2

Cor. 5:14‑21 - 2 Corinthians 5:14‑21})

23. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ ( - 1 Cor.

15:12 - 1 Corinthians 15:12})

24. Righteousness ( - Psalm 40:9 - Psalms 40:9 - - 2

Peter 2:5 - 2 Peter 2:5})

25. Forgiveness of sins ( - Acts 13:38 - Acts 13:38})

26. Resurrection of the dead ( - Acts 4:2 - Acts 4:2})

27. Peace ( - Acts 10:36 - Acts 10:36 - - Ephes.

2:17 - Ephesians 2:17})

28. All is vanity outside of God ( - Eccles.

12:8‑14 - Ecclesiastes 12:8‑14})

29. Mystery of godliness ( - 1 Tim. 3:16 - 1 Timothy 3:16})

30.Justification by faith ( - Galatians 3:8 - Galatians 3:8})

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Preaching - Acrostic Psalms

- 9/2010.101

Acrostic Psalms

We can learn the aleph‑bet by examining various Biblical passages

which are written as acrostics (alphabetically ordered verses and each

first word commencing with each Hebrew letter of the alphabet in turn,

from 1 through to 22). - Psalm 119 - Psalms 119} is a famous

example, written with 8 verses for each of the Hebrew consonants in

order, so - verses 1‑8 - Psalms 119:1‑8} each have a first

word beginning with 'aleph and - verses 9‑16 - Psalms

119:9‑16} each have a first word beginning with beth, and so on.

Acrostic passages occur in the following Psalms:

- Psalm 9 - Psalms 9} 2 verses for each of the 22 Hebrew

consonants

- Psalm 10 - Psalms 10} 2 verses each

- Psalm 25 - Psalms 25} 1 verse each

- Psalm 34 - Psalms 34} 1 verse each

- Psalm 37 - Psalms 37} 2 verses each

- Psalm 111 - Psalms 111} verse each

- Psalm 112 - Psalms 112} verse each

- Psalm 119 - Psalms 119} 8 verses each

- Psalm 145 - Psalms 145} 1 verse each

\webpage{http://www.biblicalhebrew.com/alphabet.htm

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8 Questions For Preachers

- 11/2010.101

8 Questions For Preachers

eight questions will be helpful to you:

To whom will I be preaching?

( - 1 Co 9:22‑23 - 1 Corinthians 9:22‑23})

What does the passage say about their needs?

( - Lk 4:18‑19 - Luke 4:18‑19 - - 2 Tim 3:16 - 2

Timothy 3:16})

What is the most practical way to say it?

( - Jas 1:22 - James 1:22 - - Tit 2:1 - Titus 2:1})

What is the most positive way to say it?

( - Pro 16:21 - Proverbs 16:21 - - Col

4:5‑6 - Colossians 4:5‑6})

What is the most encouraging way to say it?

( - Pro 12:25 - Proverbs 12:25 - - Ro 15:4 - Romans

15:4})

What is the simplest way to say it?

( - 1 Co 2:1 - 1 Corinthians 2:1}, - 4 - 1 Corinthians

2:4})

What is the most personal way to say it?

( - 2 Co 6:11 - 2 Corinthians 6:11 - - 1 Th 2:8 - 1

Thessalonians 2:8})

What is the most interesting way to say it?

( - Col 4:5‑6 - Colossians 4:5‑6})

In order for the contemporary preacher to be relevant in a secular

society, there are three all‑encompassing questions that must be

answered before presenting the gospel today:

What is the point of the passage? This is accomplished through

investigation and interpretation by the preacher.

What are the pictures for the people? Creativity and imagination build

the bridge from the ancient text to the present day.

What is the package for the preacher? The preacher will have to

decide, based on his or her audience, exactly how the sermon is to be

structured for maximum results.

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Preaching ‑ Making the BOOK Speak!

- 1/2011.101

Preaching ‑ Making the BOOK Speak! Story ‑ A medical missionary, had

medicine, but needed a different medicine for a certain disorder. He

sent a note by a young boy (who could not read) to the wife of the

missionary.

The boy handed the note to the missionary's wife. She passed on the

correct medicine.

The boy returned to the medical missionary and said, "You must have

taught that paper to speak." I said nothing. Your wife said nothing.

That paper spoke!

We are making the BOOK speak! (January 22, 2011, James Earl Massey ‑

Preaching, AL Pastor's Retreat, Shocco Springs, Talladega, AL.)

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10 Preaching Questions with Tim Keller

- 5/2011.101

10 Preaching Questions with Tim Keller

1. Where do you place the importance of preaching in the grand scheme

of church life?

It is central, but not alone at the center. Pastoral ministry is as

important as preaching ministry, and lay "every‑member" ministry is as

crucial as ordained ministry. I wouldnt make a hierarchy out of these

thingsthey are interdependent. But pastoral ministry and lay ministry

are not substitutes for strong preaching.

2. In a paragraph, how did you discover your gifts in preaching?

I preached about 200 different expositions a year for the first nine

years of my ministry (when I was age 24 through 33). During that time

I was considered interesting and good but I never got a lot of

feedback that I was anything special. Ive grown a lot through lots of

practice.

3. How long (on average) does it take you to prepare a sermon?

I pastor a large church and have a large staff, and so I give special

prominence to preparing the sermon. I give it 1520 hours a week. I

would not advise younger ministers to spend so much time, however. The

main way to become a good preacher is to preach a lot, and to spend

tons of time in people workthat is how you grow from becoming not

just a Bible commentator but a flesh and blood preacher. When I was a

pastor without a large staff, I put in six to eight hours on a sermon.

4. Is it important to you that a sermon contain one major theme or

idea? If so, how do you crystallize it?

I dont know that Id be so rigid as to say there has to be just one

Big Idea every time. That is a good discipline for preachers in

general, because it helps with clarity. Most texts have too much in

them for the preacher to cover in one address. You must be selective.

But sometimes a preaching‑size text simply has two or three major

ideas that are too good to pass up.

5. What is the most important aspect of a preachers style and what

should he avoid?

He should combine warmth and authority/force. That is hard to do,

since temperamentally we incline one way or the other. (And many, many

of us show neither warmth nor force in preaching.)

6. What notes, if any, do you use?

I use a very detailed outline, with many key phrases in each sub‑point

written out word for word.

7. What are the greatest perils that a preacher must avoid?

This seems to me too big a question to tackle here. Virtually

everything a preacher ought to do has a corresponding peril‑to‑avoid.

For examples, preaching should be Biblical, clear (for the mind),

practical (for the will), vivid (for the heart,) warm, forceful, and

Christo‑centric. You should avoid the opposites of all these things.

8. How do you fight to balance preparation for preaching with other

important responsibilities (e.g., pastoral care, leadership

responsibilities)?

See my remarks on #3 above. It is a very great mistake to pit pastoral

care and leadership against preaching preparation. It is only through

doing people‑work that you become the preacher you need to besomeone

who knows sin, how the heart works, what peoples struggles are, and

so on. Pastoral care and leadership are to some degree sermon prep.

More accurately, it is preparing the preacher, not just the sermon.

Prayer also prepares the preacher, not just the sermon.

9. What books on preaching, or exemplars of it, have you found most

influential in your own preaching?

British preachers have had a much greater impact on me than American

preachers. And the American preachers who have been most influential

(e.g., Jonathan Edwards) were essentially British anyway.

10. What steps do you take to nurture or encourage developing or

future preachers?

I havent done much on that front at all, and Im not happy about

that. Currently I meet with two other younger preachers on my staff

who also preach regularly. We talk specifically about their preaching

and sermon prep.

May 19, 2011

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/colin‑

adams‑10‑preaching‑questions‑with‑tim‑keller‑930.asp?utm\_source=newslet

ter&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

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Fear of Speaking Can Make You a Better Speaker By Larry Tracy

- 8/2011.101

How "Fear of Speaking" Can Make You a Better Speaker

By Larry Tracy Copyright 2003

Fear of public speaking is the number one source of apprehension in

the United States. This was first pointed out in a survey of 3000

Americans by the Sunday Times of London in 1973.

The findings have been verified by countless other surveys and studies

in subsequent years.

The Times survey found that 41% of the respondents listed "fear of

public speaking" as their number one fear, while 19% listed "death."

For the businessperson, either in a small company or a large

corporation, the ability to speak coherently and persuasively is a

vital skill, but "fear of speaking" holds many otherwise competent

people back.

Such fear of speaking can be a disaster for the sales person, but it

need not be so. Speaking skills are easy to acquire once the fear is

controlled.

In the hundreds of workshops I have conducted, I have found a high

percentage of intelligent people becoming apprehensive at the prospect

of giving a presentation.

If you suffer from that same anxiety, rest assured you are in the main

stream of the American public. In this article, I'll provide advice on

how to make this nervousness work to your advantage so that you

actually become a better public speaker because of your fear.

DON'T KILL THE BUTTERFLIES

Among the physical manifestations of nervousness can be a queasiness

frequently labeled "butterflies in the stomach." Someone in the field

of speech training once said you didn't want to kill the butterflies;

get them flying in formation.

I certainly agree with the basic premise of controlling, not

eliminating, nervousness. I find it disappointing when colleagues and

competitors in the field of presentation skills training promise that

if you buy their book or attend their workshop, you will never again

fear speaking in public.

That is absolute rubbish. It causes people to make overcoming Fear of

speaking their main objective. That objective should be to frame and

deliver their message in such a way that they persuade their audience

to adopt the point of view they are advocating.

I have seen many nervous speakers do an excellent job because they

believed in their message, and I have seen speakers so calm it seemed

rigor mortis had set in. Their calmness made them appear indifferent,

and they bombed.

You want to be somewhat nervous. It releases the adrenaline that gets

you "pumped," that shows passion and enthusiasm. It is the same as the

pre‑game jitters of athletes which allows them to convert nervousness

to energy.

Presenters must make the same conversion into that positive energy

which demonstrates the presenter's belief in his or her message.

A TRIO OF FEARS AND THEIR ANTIDOTES

1. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

As human beings, we tend to be more afraid of what we don't know. For

presenters, the audience is the great unknown. You will wonder: "What

do they expect of me? Do they know much more about the subject than I

do, etc.?" You will have the tendency to magnify the knowledge of the

audience at the expense of your own knowledge.

ANTIDOTE:

Convert unknown to known. The more information you gather on the

audience and the more intensive your practice session the more the

unknown will be converted to known.

Guard against procrastination, however, because we tend to accomplish

what is in our comfort zone, and put off more difficult tasks, such as

systematic audience intelligence collection and rigorous practice.

Bite the bullet, and you will have those fears of the unknown

dramatically reduced.

2. FEAR OF FORGETTING.

When told they will have to make a presentation, most people are

consumed by the fear their mind will go blank, and they will stand in

front of the audience without the slightest idea of what they are to

say.

They play it safe, write out their presentation, and read it verbatim

to the audience. This is a guarantee to lose their audience. People in

an audience want to listen to a speaker who is connecting with them,

and is looking at them, not at a script.

ANTIDOTE:

If you have practiced diligently, even a temporary "power outage" of

your brain can be handled.

The solution I have always used is what I call the two‑card tango.

Place a startling statistic or interesting fact that you have had to

delete for reasons of time on a 3x5 card.

On the second card, place a bullet outline of the main points of your

presentation. If convenient, place these cards in your pocket or on

the lectern.

When the "My mind has gone blank" syndrome sets in, merely take both

cards and say to the audience "Let me digress for a moment and share

with you...." then relate the information on the first card. If you

have prepared well, your mind will kick back in, and you can continue

where you left off.

If it does not, slide the second card to the front, and look at the

bullet points. Select one point and continue the presentation. Your

audience will be none the wiser.

Although I always advocate honesty with your audience, I do not

recommend that you say "I forgot what I was going to say." You may get

temporary sympathy, but audience members will wonder why they are

sitting there if the issue is not important enough for the speaker to

remember what he or she was saying.

3. FEAR OF UNANTICIPATED QUESTIONS.

Many people are not worried about making a presentation, because they

are "on their turf." These same people, however, are terrified at the

prospect of answering questions, believing they will be embarrassed by

not being able to answer questions.

ANTIDOTE:

Seek to anticipate the questions. If you have acquired accurate

"intelligence" on the audience's needs, concerns and problems, then

you should be able to preempt certain questions in your presentation,

anticipate others, and develop succinct answers to others.

No one expects you to be able to answer every question, but they do

expect you to be honest. Don't give a false answer to avoid the

embarrassment of saying: "I don't know." That honest phrase, followed

by the words "but I'll get that information for you," must be in every

presenter's vocabulary.

When you make the commitment to get the information, remember that you

have a moral obligation to do just that for the questioner and perhaps

the entire audience.

Apply these antidotes, and you'll find that the "fear of speaking"

will be the catalyst to make you a better speaker.

About the Author:

Larry Tracy, described by then‑President Ronald Reagan as "an

extraordinarily effective speaker," conducts coaching workshops for

corporate executives and government officials. His website,

\webpage{http://www.tracy‑presentation.com}, is in the number one

position for "presentation skills for executives" on Google. Visit it

for FREE tips and articles on becoming a better public speaker.

\webpage{http://www.web‑source.net/web\_development/public\_speaking.htm

Accessed August 29, 2011

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8 Starts to Avoid in Your Preaching - Rachel Blom

- 8/2011.101

8 Starts to Avoid in Your Preaching - Rachel Blom

YouthLeadersAcademy.com

Thinking of starting off your sermon in one of these ways? You might

want to try a different approach.Email this articlePrint FriendlyThe

first minutes of a sermon will determine the overall "success,"

especially when preaching. If you lose them at the start, chances are

youll never get their attention back. So how you start your sermon

when preaching is crucial. Here are eight starts you should avoid:

1. Shocking start

Ive seen preachers use this technique and so far, none of them were

successful. Starting with something shocking (a shocking video, quote,

song, joke, etc) may seem like a sure way to grab your audiences

attention, but if often backfires for several reason. First of all,

after a shock, its hard to keep interest for the rest of the sermon.

You peak too soon, so to speak. Secondly, the shocking part often has

no relation to the topic, so the audience feels cheated and somewhat

used and will lose interest. Thirdly, its easy to offend or even hurt

when trying to shock your audience, which will have obvious adverse

results.

2. Predictable start

There are preachers who start every sermon the same way, with the same

sort of story, the same joke, or the same prayer. There was this guy

that Ive heard speak four times, and every time he started with the

same lame joke. It even became a sort of running joke in our group,

and we never invited him again. Make sure your starts are fresh and

avoid being predictable. Dont overuse the same jokes or stories;

believe me, listeners have a fantastic memory for these things.

3. Offensive start

I heard a sermon once where the preacher started with saying that the

only books you should read were The Bible and books about the Bible.

Anything else was basically trash (fiction) or completely useless

(non‑fiction). And believe me, he wasnt joking. Since I love reading,

I was offended, to put it mildly. Needless to say, I didnt listen to

a word he said after that. Offending people is easier than you think.

Avoid negative remarks about todays culture, music, movies, games,

etc, before they know you, like you, and know the context in which you

re saying it. They may love the very things youre denouncing, and

while you may completely right, they wont listen to you.

4. Long start

Some intros are so long, they become a sermon in itself. I remember a

particular sermon in which the introductory story was so long, it ran

for at least ten minutes. The story dragged on, and I had lost

interest way before the "real sermon" ever began. Keep your

introductions short and to the point, then move on to the next part of

your sermon.

5. Passive start

If you want your audience to become captivated, start actively with

something thats easy to listen to, like a story, a narrative or

something emotional or funny. It could even be a movie clip. This is

especially important when preaching for youth, as their attention span

is short in general. Dont be surprised if you have lost your audience

after starting with a long Scripture reading, a long quote (quotes are

particularly hard to listen to, since theyre often complicated!) or a

long anything. Keep it short, engaging and move on.

6. Announcement‑start

Any preacher starting with "Today I want to talk about" immediately

loses my interest. If you cant come up with anything better, more

original and fresher than that, take a break from preaching until you

do. Its by far the most predictable and boring start ever. Nuff

said.

7. Show off start

There are these preachers who feel they have to start with

demonstrating their oratory skills or their knowledge. Theyll come up

with long, flowering sentences, filled with every oratory trick known

to man, or stuffed with obscure facts. If you want your audience to

dislike you, please go ahead. But otherwise Id advise you to just be

yourself. Ive seen the other end of the spectrum as well: preachers

who almost desperately tried to be cool in their intro, using all the

hip words, talking about the latest movies or music, and trying to

convince listeners that they were "it." Dont. Again: just be

yourself. Otherwise your audience will know youre pretending and stop

listening to you.

8. Apologetic start

This is a pet peeve of mine. I hate it when people start a sermon with

some sort of apology. Theyre sorry because theyre late, because the

mic wasnt working, because they have a stain on their shirt, or

whatever. The thing is, when youre apologizing, you draw attention to

stupid details nobody is interested in, and you lose precious time by

making people focus on that instead of on you and your sermon. They

know the mic wasnt working, and they can clearly see the stain on

your shirt. Theyll assume you didnt do it on purpose and that you

feel bad about it, so you really dont need to say anything about it,

especially not in your introduction. When some minor disturbance

occurs, just ignore it and start your sermon as if nothing happened.

Rachel Blom

YouthLeadersAcademy.com Rachel Blom has been involved in youth

ministry in different roles since 1999, both as a volunteer and on

staff. She simply loves teens and students and can't imagine her life

without them. In youth ministry, preaching and leadership are her two

big passions. Her focus right now is providing daily practical

training through www.YouthLeadersAcademy.com to help other youth

leaders grow and serve better in youth ministry. She resides near

Munich in the south of Germany with her husband and son.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/rachel

‑blom‑8‑starts‑to‑avoid‑in‑your‑preaching‑1020.asp?utm\_source=newslette

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Notes ‑ No Notes - Making the Move to Noteless Preaching - Peter Mead

- 8/2011.101

Notes ‑ No Notes

Making the Move to Noteless Preaching

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net Cor Deo

Remember, the goal of sermon preparation is an oral message, not a

polished manuscript for publication.Email this articlePrint

FriendlyHow is it possible to move from manuscript to notes or even no

notes? A few thoughts:

1. Manuscripting is a great approach to sermon preparation that I

affirm. The issue is not writing a manuscript, but relying on it or

reading it in the pulpit. Work put in on wording and phrasing in

preparation will yield fruit in preaching, so it is worth continuing

to manuscript, in my opinion.

2. Moving to notes means formulating a distillation on paper. That

is, putting in something similar to headings and sub‑headings in your

manuscript, then removing the text to leave these headings and

highlights of content. I dont like to use the term headings because

actually a sermon outline is not built with headings, it is made up of

ideas. The problem with headings is that they tend to be incomplete

sentences, and therefore, incomplete thoughts. If we take the heading

approach we will be tempted into clever little pithy alliterations and

summary headings that actually dont reflect the content of the

message. Much better to summarize the movement of the message and

preach with those ideas rather than alliterated bullet points.

(That is not to say that you might not be able to use trigger terms to

jog your memory of the ideas that constitute the points or movements

of the message, but these are triggers for you, not your listeners.)

3. Moving to no notes means a bit more of a step. With notes you can

still have a complex message that bounces around the canon like a hard

rubber ball in a concrete box. When you go no notes, you need to

simplify the message and tie it in more closely to the text you are

preaching. Effectively the text becomes your notes, so you look at

the text and see the shape of thought that provides the skeleton for

the message. No notes preaching doesnt require superior memory

skills, it requires only greater familiarization with the text and a

more accessible / clear / logical / simple message. If a message is

so complex that you need notes to help you navigate it, then what hope

do your listeners have? Youve spent hours on it; they only get one

shot!

4. Moving to notes or no notes requires practice. I dont mean just

trying and failing in the pulpit (in reality you wont fail as

easily as you expect). What I mean is running through the message

without the manuscript. Prayerfully practicing before you preach is

not at all unspiritual. I would encourage preachers to preach...often

a message makes sense on paper, but simply wont flow from your

mouth. Better to find that out before you preach it on Sunday!

Remember, the goal of sermon preparation is an oral communication

event, not a polished manuscript for publication.

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.netCor Deo

Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

church in the UK. He serves as director of Cor Deoan innovative

mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/peter‑

mead‑making‑the‑move‑to‑noteless‑preaching‑1021.asp?utm\_source=newslett

er&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

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Preachers Should Preach... (HEC)

- 9/2011.101

(Paul told Timothy to do tho things.)

Preach the Word and Reach the World

God is going to judge our ministry by what we've done, how we've done

it and why we've done it.

Judge ‑ our message, our motive, and our methods.

- 2 Timothy 4:1 (NASB) - 2 Timothy 4:1 NASB} I solemnly

charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge

the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;

but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for

themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside

to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an

evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul told Timothy three things.

1. The Charge to Be Faithful.

Preach the word.

A. Preach Confidently. V2 preach the word (NASB). (He's telling him

how to preach, not just what to preach.)

Do you

B. Preach Compellingly. V2, be ready (NASB).

(Put some FIRE in your sermons or put your sermons in the FIRE. James

Merrit, Preaching Conference, September 7, 2011.)

C. Preach Continuously. v2 in season/out of season (NASB).

D. Preach Convictively ‑ v2 reprove (NASB).

The Holy Spirit will reprove. ‑ - John 16:8 (KJV) - John

16:8 KJV} And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and

of righteousness, and of judgment:

Peter Cartwright was a circuit riding Methodist preacher in the

nineteenth century, who on one occasion was getting ready to preach to

a very large congregation. Somebody came to him and said "Preacher,

you need to know that President Andrew Jackson is in the audience, so

make sure that whatever you say is not offensive to the President." He

said "Thank you for telling me that." He got to the pulpit and said "I

have been told that Andrew Jackson is in this congregation and I've

been asked to carefully guard what I'm going to say. I want to begin

by saying that Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn't repent of

his sins." You could have heard a pin drop. After the service,

President Andrew Jackson walked up to Peter Cartwright and said "If I

had a regiment of men like you, I could whip this world."

\webpage{http://www.uu.edu/centers/rglee/fellows/fall03/merritt.htm

E. Preach Courageously, ‑ v2 Rebuke (NASB).

A man was converted that had five wives. He was told, "Now you are a

Christian, you pick one, you can only have one." Man said, "I'll pray,

you go tell them."

F. Preach Constructively. v2 Exhort (NASB).

If it's always negative ‑ it's probably NOT the Word of the Lord.

A "heathen" was driving and saw a big sign, "The end is near." The

Heathen said, I am sick of these Christians forcing their message down

your throat..." Then a big SPLASH! Two Christians walking away...

"Maybe we need to say on the sign, the bridge is out."

Gospel ‑ Good news.

A priest and pastor from the local parishes are standing by the side

of the road holding up a sign that reads, "The End is Near! Turn

around before it's too late!"

"Leave us alone you religious nuts!" yelled the first driver as he

sped by.

From around the curve they heard screeching tires and a big splash.

"Do you think," said one clergy to the other, "we should just put up a

sign that says 'Bridge Out' instead?"

\webpage{http://www.cleanjoke.com/humor/The‑End‑is‑Near.html

\webpage{http://jokes.christiansunite.com/Mistakes/The\_End\_Is\_Near.sht

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G. Preach Compassionately. v2 Great Patience and Instruction (NASB).

Sheep are dumb. You will never go to a circus and see trained sheep.

II. We must Realize the Choice to Be Doubtful

You must choose to preach the Word of God.

You can not choose how your people will receive it.

V3 ‑ 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound

doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate

for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

People do not want HOLY ‑ they want HAPPY.

Entertainment.

Eugene Peterson ‑ Message ‑ "You're going to find... and chase

mirages."

- 2 Timothy 4:3‑4 - 2 Timothy 4:3‑4} (TMSG) 3. You're going to

find that there will be times when people will have no stomach for

solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk foodcatchy

opinions that tickle their fancy. 4. They'll turn their backs on

truth and chase mirages. (The Message: The Bible in Contemporary

Language)

Some want to hear about Heaven but not Hell

They have itchy ears.

Some are more interested in "Length, and not depth."

Some, it's what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear.

A woman was asked to watch someone lese's children. The kids said,

"Mom always makes biscuits." The woman put together some biscuits. The

kids didn't eat then. Mom fixes them, but I don't eat them.

V4 ‑ and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn

aside to myths.

If you don't teach them to believe the right things, they will

believe the wrong things.

III We must Receive the Challenge to Be Watchful

A. Be Alert ‑ v5 Be sober in all things.

Be aware of the culture. What does God say about this cultural aspect

of life.

...

(HEC ‑ Paul, read their inscriptions, hear their poets, related the

changing culture)

According to Walt Mueller who wrote Understanding Today's Youth

Culture, there three principles of youth ministry.

1. Know the unchanging WORD, the incarnate God, Jesus and His Word,

the Bible.

2. Know the changing kids and their changing world (development and

relating to their world).

3. Take the unchanging Word to changing kids in a changing world.

We are in the world and not of the world ( - John 17:15 - John

17:15}). In the church not of the church.

We must learn to minister in a changing world. - Acts

17 - Acts 17}, Paul walked their streets, read their inscriptions,

quoted their poets.

In - Acts 17 - Acts 17}, Paul walked their streets.

- Acts 17:2 - Acts 17:2} And Paul, as his manner was, went

in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the

scriptures,

He was aware of their situation.

- Acts 17:16 - Acts 17:16} Now while Paul waited for them

at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly

given to idolatry.

He read their inscriptions and preached from their material.

- Acts 17:22 - Acts 17:22} Then Paul stood in the midst of

Mars' hill, and said, [Ye] men of Athens, I perceive that in all

things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar

with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye

ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

He quoted their poets.

- Acts 17:28 - Acts 17:28} For in him we live, and move, and

have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we

are also his offspring.

Other places ‑ - Titus 1:12 - Titus 1:12} One of themselves,

[even] a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians [are] alway liars,

evil beasts, slow bellies.

...

So What? (How does this effect me?) Now What? (It's not for

information but transformation.)

B. Be Adaptable v5 Endure Hardship.

Mind of a scholar, heart of a child and the hide of a rhinoceros.

Vance Havner.

Many want to quit on Monday.

C. Be Aggressive ‑ v5 ‑ do the word of evangelist.

More trouble is started with men pastors counseling women.

James Merrit says, "I am a poor counselor. If you come to me

depressed, you will leave suicidal." :)

Sharing your faith will keep you fired up.

NOW!

D. Be Accountable‑ v5 p fulfill your ministry

Robert Eglund, Deacon, preached, only a few there, no pastor.

- Isaiah 45:22 (KJV) - Isaiah 45:22 KJV} Look unto me, and

be ye saved, all the ends of the earth...

Look

To Him

You can be saved.

ALL

the ends of the earth ‑ everyone.

There was a 13 year old boy. If you will look to Jesus, you will be

saved. Later, that 13 year old boy wrote in his journal. Charles

Haddon Spurgeon.

Charles Spurgeon tells of his searching for God as a young lad in

London. For five years, he wandered from place to place seeking

someone who could give him a word of assurance. He said he did not so

much fear the wrath of God as he feared sin itself for what it was. He

said, "If some preacher had told me to bare my back and with fifty

lashes would earn eternal life, I would have instantly ripped the

shirt from my back and said, Do your worst. Spare not the rod if it

will bring peace to my troubled soul.' If they had told me to run a

hundred miles barefooted, I would have started off immediately, if I

could have gained eternal life. But to trust in Christ, rest upon His

finished work, simply by faith take hold of Him, do nothing except

believe and receive, this I knew not how to get hold of at all."

In the book, Life and Work of Spurgeon, published in 1890, Mr.

Spurgeon gives his own personal account of his conversion

"I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair now, had

it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday

morning, when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no

further, I turned down a court and came to a little Primitive

Methodist chapel. In that chapel there might be a dozen or fifteen

people. The minister did not come that morning; snowed up, I suppose.

A poor man, a shoemaker, a tailor, or something of that sort, went

into the pulpit to preacher.

This poor man was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason

that he had nothing else to say. The text was, "Look unto Me, and be

ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He did not even pronounce the

words rightly, but that did not matter.

There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in the text. He began

thus: "My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says,

Look.' Now that does not take a great deal of effort. It ain't lifting

your foot or finger; it is just look.' Well, a man need not go to

college to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet can look. A man

need not be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look: a child

can look. But this is what the text says, "look unto me.' Many look to

themselves. No use looking there. You'll never find comfort in

yourself. Some one look to God the Father. Not look to Him by and by.

Jesus Christ says, Look unto me.'

When he had gotten about that length and managed to spin out ten

minutes or so, he was at the length of his tether. Then he looked at

me under the gallery, and I dare say, with so few present, he knew me

to be a stranger. He then said, Young man, you look so miserable."

Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to having remarks made on

my personal appearance from the pulpit before. However, it was a good

blow struck. He continued,And you will always be miserable ‑‑‑

miserable in life and miserable in death ‑‑‑ if you do not obey my

text. But if you obey, now, this moment, you will be saved."

Then he shouted, Young man, look to Jesus Christ; look now.' I did

look to Jesus Christ. I looked until I could have looked my eyes away;

and in heaven I will look still, in joy unutterable.

There and then the cloud was gone; the darkness had rolled away, and

that moment I saw the sun. I could have risen that moment and sung

with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ,

and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had

told me that before ‑‑ look unto Christ and you shall be saved."

There are many people, like Mr. Spurgeon, who have been raised by

godly parents, attend church regularly, yet they never fully

understand how to be saved, they never get a mental grasp of the

gospel to the saving of their souls. For this reason, I want to preach

a clear salvation message using the single scripture that Charles

Spurgeon heard the day he was saved ‑‑ - Isaiah

45:22 - Isaiah 45:22}.

The impromptu preacher was Robert England, a deacon. He had walked six

miles to that church that morning ‑‑ in the snow. Thank God Robert

England didn't stay home that morning. Robert England had never

preached before, but he preached that morning. And thank God Robert

England didn't preach on "How to be up when the weather is down" or

"How to glow in the snow." Thank God, he preached the gospel, the old,

old story and Jesus and His love.

\webpage{http://www.gospelweb.net/JerryLocke/LockeStandAloneSeries9.ht

m

(Ill ‑ Guy preached first sermon ‑ When I walked in, only God and I

knew what I was going to preach. Now only God knows.)

I'm glad he didn't preach

How to be up when the weather is down.

How to grow in the snow.

Prayer

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20 Laws of Communication

- 9/2011.101

Preaching 20 Laws of Communication

Top Laws of Communication

Of the 20, \* is what he shared.

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

\* 1. Fill the Pulpit and Let God Fill the Building

(We are known by what we... Flee from. Follow After. Fight For. Are

Faithful to.)

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

2. People Buy on Emotion and Justify on Fact

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

3. Begin with the End in Mind

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

\* 4. Creative Presentation Are like Giving Birth to Barb‑wire but

Someone Has to Do It.

We create. We choose not to bring negative. The difference between

imagination and fantasy. Disney is a fantasy world. Epcot is a world

of imagination. Imagination helps our congregation step into

possibilities.

Too many speech teachers are teaching that speaking is a medium of

words rather a medium of sight and sound which happens to use words.

Imagination is the imaginings function of the mind. It is thinking by

seeing, as contrasted with reasoning. Imagination puts flesh on

clothes on mere naked ideas and facts. It make the unknown known and

the unseen seen.

We "Cluster" for the audience. Moving from memorized to organized.

Biblical text determines substance and the sermonizer determines the

structure.

We "Connect."

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

5. People Need Ears Turned into Eyes for the Presentation

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

6. Study Yourself to Death, Pray Yourself Back to Life.

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

7. Truth Makes a Lousy Club but a Great Sword.

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

\* 8. The Mind Craves Order not Chaos ‑

Our thinking constitutes at least 50,000 thoughts per day.

How many thought are new thoughts.

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

9. What Looks Easy in Public Was Hard in Private

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

\* 10. The Mind Is Not a Debating Hall but a Picture Gallery

Make a SHARP presentation: Stories; Humor Analogies, Reference and

quotes, Pictures and visual aids. All of the SHARP principles work

together to bring life to your presentation.

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

\* 11. Length Is Not Determined by the Clock but by the Crowd.

When the people are "checking out" ‑ bring the sermon to a

conclusion.

(James Merrit ‑ I started with three books, I colored in two of

them.)

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

12. Failure Is Not in Logistics but in Not Knowing the Audience

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

13 If a Presenter Speaks Offensively, People Respond Defensively

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

14. The Difference Between a Foul Ball and a Home Run Is Timing

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

15. People Do Not Just Want to Hear Reasons but to See Visions

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

16. The Lowest Form of Communication Is Predictability

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

17. The Polish Is in the Transition

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

18. Humor Is the Quickest Way to a Person's Heart

Left Brain (Principles/Rational)

19. The First Ninety Seconds Are the Most Important

Right Brain (Pictures/Relational)

20. Give More than People Expect to Receive

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The Sermon's Exposition - Adrian Rogers - 9/2011.101

The Sermon's Exposition

KEY ‑ The Pastor As Shepherd:

Session VI: guards, guides, grows, pulpit, convicts, corrects,

constructs, confidence, consistency, courage, content.

Session VII: Topical, Textual, Expository, introduction, exposition,

conclusion, proposition, sermon, text, Word, experience, passage,

theme, pertinent, value, fear, life, positive, receives, practical,

needs, pointed, inform, transform, knowledge, lives, provocative,

plain, simple, persuasive, material, lesson, commandment, sin,

blessing, truth, topics, texts, quotations, illustrations, outline,

conclusion, application, introduce, notes, manuscript

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight

thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but

of a ready mind;" ( - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV) - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV}.

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guards)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guides)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (grows)

"It is not your job to fill the pew; it is your job to fill the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (pulpit)

‑ If sheep are hungry, they will "BITE" each other.

- Acts 6:3 (KJV) - Acts 6:3 KJV} Wherefore, brethren, look

ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost

and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

This business ‑ feeding widows.

Deacons are the "The Business" managers.

- Acts 6:4 (KJV) - Acts 6:4 KJV} But we will give ourselves

continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

We ‑ shepherds.

Expository preaching is MORE than just explaining.

Exposition is explanation, argumentation, illustration, application and motivation. AR/vol8

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" ( - 2

Tim. 4:2 KJV) - 2 Timothy 4:2 KJV}.

1. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Reproves." (convicts)

‑ The more exposition ‑ The less counseling.

2. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Rebukes." (corrects)

‑ Preach plain. Stand behind the Word of God. (Billy Graham ‑ Donald

Whitley)

‑ Instant in season out of season

Take opportunities & MAKE opportunities

\* in season ‑ scheduled ministry opportunities.

\* out of season ‑ UNSCHEDULED ‑ open doors/ windows

‑ If someone drops a handkerchief & says preach ‑ you should be on

the second point before it hits the ground. :)

3. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Exhort with all longsuffering and

doctrine." (constructs)

The Pastor As Shepherd | Ministry That Feeds the Flock

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I. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(confidence)

II. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(consistency)

‑ No rut preaching. Preach the WHOLE counsel of God.

‑ An 85yr old pastor said, "I have only pastured three churches and I

stayed with them all until they died. :)

‑ Don't Have a Missionary Sermon ‑ That's when it departs & 1goes

EVERYWHERE :)

III. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(courage)

‑ A friend asked, "Where you preaching to me?" I responded, "I was

shooting down in a hole ‑ if you were in it ‑ then that's why you were

hit."

IV. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(content)

‑ You don't have wonder what you will preach.

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session viNotes & thoughts:

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Session VII

07. The Sermon's Preparation

Vol8. ‑

‑ Verse by verse is dull & deadly. It turns the pulpit into a

classroom. Expository is finding a truth. The Bible means what it

means. No hunting. One meaning with 10,000 applications. Find a theme

‑ preaching is not filling a bucket. But lighting a torch.

‑ In my humble but ACCURATE opinion . :)

‑ When do you go too long? Preaching John for seven years is too

long. You will lose your people. You can drown a cat in cream.

‑ Gospel John ‑ how to be saved

‑ 1 John ‑ how you know you are saved

‑ What's over your head is under Jesus' feet. :)

End of 09

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"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not

to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ( - 2 Tim.

2:15 KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV}.

There are three major classifications of sermons:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Topical)

‑ During President Clinton's service, I preached, Does Character

Count?

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Textual)

3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Expository)

‑ A paragraph or more. Chapter/book

Every sermon should have the following parts.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them what you're going to tell

them. (introduction)

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (or explanation) Tell them. (exposition)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them you told them. (conclusion)

‑ Tell them what you are going to say . Say it . Tell them what you

said.

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Every sermon should have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (proposition)

If you don't have a proposition, you do not have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

(sermon)

‑ A sermon in a sentence

‑ This is where I'm aiming

This is what I use:

‑ Hey You ‑ Look ‑ Do

Hey You ‑ Introduction

Look ‑ Exposition

Do ‑ Action

The Principles of Sermon Preparation:

I. Choose the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (text)

A good expositor should be aware of two books:

Number one is the book of God's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Word), and the other is the

book of human

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (experience)

15min

‑ A teacher complained to a coach, we have a student that made 4‑Fs &

a D. The Coach said, "It sounds like he's giving too much attention to

one subject."

‑ Be balanced

II. Analyze the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (passage)

‑ There are seams in coconuts. If you know about them, you can open a

coconut easily. The Bible has seams.

Use your tools:

Word studies

‑ Greek 21mins ... Dumb preacher ‑ repent ‑ move back in the

penthouse.

Commentaries

... John Phillips ‑ great

Sermons (Transcripts of sermons of many preachers, including Adrian

Rogers, can be found at www.sermonsearch.com)

... Stand under whales with pales.

... If I want to learn baseball ‑ study baseball players. Don't

steroids ‑ some preachers need steroids.

Bible Atlas

Concordance

III. Prayerfully select a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the passage. (theme)

... 7 points of a sermons don't say 7 things ‑ it says 1 thing 7

ways.

... 27min

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pertinent)

What? So What? Now What?

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How to get attention. Preach about:

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (value)

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fear)

Things that affect your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (life)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (positive)

"Man is not saved by what he gives up, but by what he

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (receives)

3. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (practical)

"Preach to meet \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (needs)

4. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pointed)

"Good preaching is not just to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is to

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (inform, transform)

"The Bible was not given to increase our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but to

change our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ‑ D. L. Moody (knowledge, lives)

5. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (provocative)

6. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (plain)

- 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 1 Corinthians 13:1} (REWORKED) Though

I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not CLARITY, I

am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

:)

"You really don't understand something unless you can communicate it

in

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ way." ‑ Albert Einstein (simple)

7. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( persuasive)

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IV. Gather your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (material)

Ask The Discovery Questions:

Who

When

What

Why

Wherefore

Is there....

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to learn? (lesson)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to obey? (commandment)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to avoid? (sin)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy? (blessing)

a new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to carry with me? (truth)

File things by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

and by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(topics, texts, quotations, illustrations)

If quote

‑Quote source

‑ Old man who went to church, he was well read. The preacher was also

well read and would like to use quotes but never gave the source. As

the preacher would preach, the old man would shout: Swindoll.

Spurgeon. The Preacher shouted, "Shut up fool." Old man said,

That was his own." :)

V. Rework your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and polish it. (outline)

Put verbs in your outline.

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VI. Write your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in that

order. (conclusion, application)

‑ What do you want them to do? Know? etc.

‑ Start the sermon with a question:

What is greater than God... more evil than the devil... the poor

have it... the rich need it... and if you eat it you will die?

Answer: NOTHING

\webpage{http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\_is\_greater\_than\_God...\_more\_evi

l\_than\_the\_devil...\_the\_poor\_have\_it...\_the\_rich\_need\_it...\_and\_if\_you\_

eat\_it\_you\_will\_die#ixzz1XztlSsT7

What's more powerful than God? More evil than devil? If you eat it ‑

you'll die?

VII. You are ready to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your sermon. (introduce)

There are three kinds of sermons:

1. Those you can listen to.

2. Those you can't listen to.

3. Those you must listen to.

Make yours a "must listen to" sermon.

VIII. Make full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or a full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (notes,

manuscript)

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Prodigal Son ‑ bad alliteration Fodder fragments frustrated fled

fathers feet

Melody in F

(The Prodigal Son)

(author unknown)

Feeling footloose and frisky,

a featherbrained fellow

Forced his fond father to fork

over the farthings.

And flew far to foreign fields

And frittered his fortune

feasting

Fabulously with faithless

friends.

Fleeced by his fellows in

folly, and facing

Famine, he found himself a

feed‑flinger in a

Filthy farm yard.

Fairly famished, he fain

would have filled

His frame with foraged food

from fodder

Fragments.

"Fooey, my father's flunkies fare far finer,"

The frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled,

frankly

Facing facts. Frustrated by failure, and filled

with foreboding,

He fled forthwith to his family.

Falling at his father's feet, he forlornly

fumbled,

"Father, I've flunked, and fruitlessly forfeited

Family fellowship & favor."

The far‑sighted father, forestalling

Further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to

Fetch a fatling from the flock

and fix a feast.

The fugitive's fault‑finding

brother frowned on fickle

forgiveness of former

folderol.

But the faithful father figured,

"Filial fidelity is fine, but the

fugitive is found! What

forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled!

Let fanfares flare!"

Father's forgiveness formed

the foundation for the

former fugitive's future

fortitude!

\webpage{http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository‑luke‑15‑11‑32.htm

\webpage{http://gbcdecatur.org/sermons/PityParty.html

‑ Weakest ink better than strongest memory.

Session VIINotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor 2

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Session VIII

Sample Sermons

Discipleship

‑ worship at any cost ‑ hate father/mother

‑ work at any cost ‑

‑ war at any cost ‑ not cowards ‑ compromise

‑ witness at any cost ‑

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‑ Using Notes ‑ Preacher was preaching, a page fell out of his Bible

and he repeated a few times, "Adam said to Eve.... (page missing)

there's a leaf missing." :)

‑ Do the Introduction ‑ one of the last things you do.

Vol 12/4mins

\*\*\* ‑ Salvation is free ‑ discipleship costs

08. The Sermon's Illustration

KEY ‑ Session VIII: house, windows, known, unknown, literally

illustrate, punctuate, motivate, skyscraper, mindbender, sleep

inducer, Plan, alive, alert, Read, enlightenment, enjoyment,

enrichment, devotional, doctrinal, practical, enablement, ears, eyes,

cathedrals, leadership, creative, logical, heat, light, different,

ideas, imagination, solutions, creative, your own ideas, unusual,

words, write, people, authors

"The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of

fools" ( - Proverbs 26:7 KJV) - Proverbs 26:7 KJV}.

The sermon is the\_\_\_ (house), and the illustrations are the \_\_

(windows) that let the light in.

Jesus, the master teacher, moved his audience from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to

the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (known, unknown)

1:30

‑ Jesus found MANY illustrations in the world around Him. Farmer,

seeds, ground, fisherman, net, sea.

‑ Jesus took what they "knew" ‑ fisherman ‑ and then brought them to

the "unknown" ‑ net/everything

‑ Paul used illustrations about boxing, running a race. He was a

sportsman.

I. There are various kinds of illustrations:

1. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (literally

illustrate)

‑ sower & sees

‑ Lester Rolloff tells the story of Dr Law & Dr Grace

Eyes ‑ looking at bad things

Hands ‑ do evil

Feet ‑ go bad places

Dr law says you need a new heart.

Dr Grace put a new heart in me. Now eyes, feet & hand now do

different.

2. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (punctuate)

‑ humor (8min)

‑ you are not a comedian. It becomes a distraction.

‑ Humor, let's them up for air.

‑ let it ‑ Relax, Renew, Refresh \*\*\*

‑ Spurgen was criticized for using humor.

He said, "If you knew how much I held back ‑ you'd be proud of me."

See ‑

\webpage{http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/whyseprusehu.html

‑ tickle oyster ‑ open shell ‑ apply the knife

3. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (motivate)

‑ picture woman ear against mans chest

She is listening to her son's heart... in another man's chest. \*\*\*

II. There are some sermonic dangers that relate to illustrations:

1. The \_\_ (skyscraper) sermonOne story upon another.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‑ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has all walls and no

windows. (mind‑bender)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has walls but they are dull

gray and the windows are dirty. (sleep inducer)

‑ Are you going to church?

Yes ‑ I need the sleep. :)

III. The source and the secret of good illustrations:

1. \_\_ ahead. (Plan)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (alive, alert

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ constantly. (Read)

A. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enlightenment)

B. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enjoyment)

14min

‑ Leaders/readers

‑ In a running stream, if wire is stretched across ‑ it will catch

grass.

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C. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enrichment)

‑ Warren Wierbe ‑ read 30 mins a day on one subject = PhD in 10 yrs

16min

‑ Education is expensive ‑ ignorance will cost more.

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the heart. (devotional)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the mind. (doctrinal)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the will. (practical)

D. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enablement)

17mins

‑ we must upgrade our ministry.

‑ Don't be a book recluse ‑ There are ditches on both sides of the

road.

IV. Develop your creativity.

A. What is creativity?

Turning eyes into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and ears into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ears,

eyes)

Information and communication are not always the same. This is the

danger of computer knowledge. 19:30min

God is the God of creation, and He is an artist. "Good architecture

is not an arrangement of beautiful materials, but a beautiful

arrangement of materials."

Learn to turn rock piles into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (cathedrals)

24mins

Use creativity in your preaching, and in your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(leadership)

B. There is the "right brainleft brain" phenomenon.

The right brain is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ part (musicians, poets,

etc). (creative)

The left brain is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (lawyers, architects, etc).

(logical)

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??? heat, light, ???

C. Here are the ten steps to creativity:

1. Dare to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (different)

2. Play with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ideas)

3. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (imagination)

4 Look for needs that need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (solutions)

5. Keep company with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people. (creative)

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6. Believe in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (your own ideas)

7. Be on the lookout for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (unusual)

8. Learn to love \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (words)

9. Think and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (write)

10. Get acquainted with creative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and creative

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (people, authors)

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Session IX

Vol14

09. The Sermon's Presentation

KEY ‑ Session IX: faultless, dirty, full, touch, task, preach, hear,

fit, fashionable, forceful, fresh, fitting.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:12 KJV).

I. Be morally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (faultless) (Not so much sinless but

blameless.)

‑ Jesus needed anointed HS

‑ Special touch ‑ for special task

"God will not use a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vessel." (dirty)

II. Be spiritually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (full)

‑ We need anointing above all.

‑ Sermons must bounce off of heaven first.

‑ Please God ‑ not to please man. If you are trying to please man, you

will not please God.

‑ I have preached the last sermon people have heard (Columbus, GA and

more.)

‑ Remember the well, you had to prime it, then pump. A man say someone

from a distance, he was pumping like crazy! The water was flowing

freely! When he was close enough to see ‑ it wasn't a man but a wooden

image of a man ‑ the pump was moving him. It was an artesian well. The

Spirit moves us. We do not direct the Spirit.

\*\*\* "The anointing is a special \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for a specific

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (touch, task)

"You ought to preach as if it were the last sermon you would ever

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or the last

sermon they would ever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (preach, hear)

III. Be physically \_\_\_\_\_\_. (fit)

Learn to eat right and to exercise. People do not tend to follow

flabby preachers.

Get a good night's rest before you preach.

‑ Nap If You Are a Night Time Preacher

Be always freshly bathed and shaved. 14:30min

IV. Be modestly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fashionable)

If you are a leader, look and dress like it.

Invest in clothes.

Don't set styles, but dress in style.

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V. Be visibly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (forceful)

Whenever you are on the platform, stand up straight, be alert, be

alive and walk tall.

Whenever seated on the platform, sit up straight with both feet on the

floor.

Use your whole body to preach.

Learn to use your eyes.

Use your face.

Avoid distracting habits.

VI. Be verbally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fresh)

Learn to use your voice.

Work on your vocabulary and choose your words carefully. Avoid

clichés.

Have someone to help you with grammar and pronunciation.

Make it clear.

32mins

‑ it's kiss‑tomary to cuss the bride :)

VII. Be socially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fitting)

Don't use jokes that fail to edify.

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Session X

10. The Sermon's Invitation

KEY ‑ Session X: courageously, clearly, concisely, convincingly,

cooperatively, consistently, creatively, compassionately,

convictionally, celebratively.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess

also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me

before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"

(Matthew 10:3233 KJV).

The Bible is full of examples of the public invitation.

1. Pentecost

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and

to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the

Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and

exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts

2:3840 KJV).

2. Garden of Eden

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art

thou?" ( - Genesis 3:9 KJV) - Genesis 3:9 KJV}.

3. Joshua

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day

whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that

were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in

whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the

LORD" ( - Joshua 24:15 KJV) - Joshua 24:15 KJV}.

4. Elijah on Mt. Carmel

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye

between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal,

then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" ( - 1

Kings 18:21 KJV) - 1 Kings 18:21 KJV}.

The Bible closes with an invitation.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,

Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him

take the water of life freely" ( - Rev. 22:17 KJV) - Revelation

22:17 KJV}.

All preaching should have some kind of invitation or it is not

preaching at all.

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‑ Now it's the call for... Know ‑ Do ‑ Believe

I. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (courageously)

‑ - 2 Corinthians 5:11 (KJV) - 2 Corinthians 5:11 KJV}

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

‑ Believe in what you are saying

- Romans 14:5 - Romans 14:5} ...Let every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind.

‑ Believe they will come. (As you come, not if you come...)

II. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (clearly)

‑ Not sure ‑ sinners? Saints?

‑ no cliche'

9.31min

III. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (concisely)

‑ Do not go on and on.

IV. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (convincingly)

V. Give the invitation \_\_. (cooperatively)

‑ involve the church ‑ encourage them to stay. Thank you for staying.

‑ Call altar workers ministers, not counselors.

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VI. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (consistently)

‑ Always give some way for them to respond.

VII. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (creatively)

‑ Not in a runt

‑ Bow your eyes, close your heads ‑ :)

VIII. Give the invitation \_\_. (compassionately)

IX. Give the invitation\_\_\_\_\_\_. (convictionally)

X. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (celebratively)

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/mPastors

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Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

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The Pastor as Bishop

Session XI

11. The Church's Organizational Principles

KEY ‑ Session XI:

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for

they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they

may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for

you" ( - Hebrews 13:17 KJV) - Hebrews 13:17 KJV}.

Vol16

Pastor Led

Deacon Served

Committee Operated

Congregation Approved

\*

"Most of the problems that churches have are not doctrinal and they're

not moral, they are

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (procedural)

I. The church is the organized body of Jesus Christ.

"The church is not a corporation with Jesus as the president; it is a

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus

as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (body, head)

1. In a body there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ person. (manifested)

‑ All you know of me is MANIFESTED thru my body

2. In a body there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ purpose. (ministering)

‑ My body doesn't tell me what to do. If so, I'd still be sleeping.

‑ My body doesn't control me, I control it.

- Philippians 3:19 - Philippians 3:19} Whose end is

destruction, whose God is their belly...

3. In the body there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ power. (motivating)

"The body is not primarily an organization, it is an

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (organism)

‑ a Body Without the Spirit Is a Corps.

A Spirit Without Body Is a Ghost

Vol16/11

4. In a body there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ program. (mutual)

‑ We Are Working Together

‑ Man Wrestling with a Stove ‑ Neighbor Ran Started Pushing... & Said

I Don't Think We're Going to Get it in the Kitchen. The other man

said, "Kitchen! I'm trying to get it in the Truck! :)

II. How then is a church to be organized?

1. A church is to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ led. (pastor)

"You cannot have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ without having

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (responsibility, authority)

‑ The pastor is appointed & anointed but not a dictator

Pastors ‑ - 1 Thessalonians 5:12 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12} And

we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are

over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very

highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among

yourselves.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:13 (NIV) - 1 Thessalonians 5:13 NIV}

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work....

‑ - Hebrews 13:7 (KJV) - Hebrews 13:7 KJV} Remember them

which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of

God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

The Rule ‑ Not Ruler :)

17min

Jesus washed feet. 19:30

‑ When it comes to your pastor, you should: Remember ‑ Respond ‑

Respect

‑ Think of the "school crossing guard"

They have a "Sign" that represents ‑ authority

They are helping kids ‑ that represents ‑ servanthood

‑ We are not charged to make disciples... but disciple makers! \*\*\*

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2. A church is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ served. (deacon)

A. Where there is life, there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (growth)

Murmuring ‑ - Acts 6:1 (KJV) - Acts 6:1 KJV} And in those

days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a

murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows

were neglected in the daily ministration.

‑ There was a thought of discrimination.

- Acts 6:2 (KJV) - Acts 6:2 KJV} Then the twelve called the

multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that

we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

B. Where there is growth, there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (problems)

Where there's growth, you will have problems.

C. Where there are problems, there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(solutions)

30:min

‑ - Acts 6:3 (KJV) - Acts 6:3 KJV} Wherefore, brethren, look

ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost

and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

‑ Over this Business. Not over THE business.

The solution in the early church was the creation of deacons.

32min

Biblical qualifications for deacons:

They are to have an established \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (testimony)

- Acts 6:3 - Acts 6:3} ...men of honest report...

They are to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‑ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Spirit‑filled)

- Acts 6:3 - Acts 6:3} ... full of the Holy Ghost ...

They are to be full of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (wisdom)

- Acts 6:3 - Acts 6:3} ... and wisdom. . .

35min

There is no job that only a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ may do. There is no job

that a deacon

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do. (deacon, may not)

‑ A Deacon may not say, this is "Deacon" business.

‑ They can preach, baptize, etc.

‑ They are servants of the church.

D. Where there are solutions, there is even \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

growth. (greater)

‑ HEC ‑ 7 panels in Acts

3. A church is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ operated. (committee)

- 2 Timothy 2:2 (KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:2 KJV} And the things

that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou

to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Committee is not in the Bible but the word commit is.

"Your job as a pastor is to help people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their gifts." (discover, develop, deploy) \*\*\*

Discover, Develop, Deploy (Not enjoyment but employment. Tools, not

toys.)

‑ Nursery workers are important, let them know it.

4. A church is to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ confirmed.

(congregationally)

‑ The head (pastor) can not go where the body (congregationally) will

not take it.

\*\*\* We are...

Pastor ‑ Led

Deacon ‑ Served

Committee ‑ Operated

Congregation ‑ Approved

^^^

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The pastor as Bishop

Session XII

12. The Pastor's Spiritual Authority

KEY ‑ Session XII: world, flesh, devil, external, internal, infernal,

gloriously given, legally lost, righteously regained, was, did,

dominion, personally possessed, under and over.

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the

devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I

beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you

power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of

the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:1719

KJV).

Ours is a spiritual battle.

Vol 17

Q&A

‑ You can't manage spiritual problems. And you can't spiritual management problems. \*\*\*

Well, we will keep them a part.

‑ AR ‑ I will not have a deacon that uses tobacco.

‑ Bible ‑ One other book? A book I haven't read.

Vol 18

‑ Weapon ‑ Spiritual Authority

‑ The only thing that can kill a lie is the truth.

We're up against three great enemies: the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (world, flesh, devil)

1. The world is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ foe. (external)

2. The flesh is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ foe. (internal)

Vol 18:5

‑ - 1 Peter 3:3 (KJV) - 1 Peter 3:3 KJV} Whose adorning let

it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing

of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

Adorning ‑ G2889. kosmos, kos'‑mos, where we get Cosmetics. It's the

world (not worldly.) It's be more than just

9min

‑ by nature ‑ we are the children of wrath

- Ephesians 2:3 - Ephesians 2:3} ...and were by nature the

children of wrath...

‑ Brother & sister fighting. The brother called her a bad name, hit

her with the broom, then spit on her. Mom said, "Son, the devil made

you do that."

He said "The devil made me call her a bad name, hit her with the

broom, but spitting on her was my idea." :)

3. The devil is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ foe. (infernal)

‑ - Philippians 1:28 (KJV) - Philippians 1:28 KJV} And in

nothing terrified by your adversaries...

Don't be afraid of the devil, but is he afraid of you?

- Luke 10:19 (KJV) - Luke 10:19 KJV} Behold, I give unto you

power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of

the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Power ‑ G1849, exousia, ex‑oo‑see'‑ah, authority.

...to tread on serpents and scorpions,

Power ‑ G1411, dunamis, doo'‑nam‑is, miraculous power, might,

strength.

...of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

I. Kingdom authority was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to man.

(gloriously given)

‑ Story of boy who lost his birth certificate. Crying on the school

steps. The janitor asked, "Why are you crying?" ‑ Boy, "I lost my

excuse for being born." :)

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II. Kingdom authority was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a

man. (legally lost)

‑ - Romans 6:16 (KJV) - Romans 6:16 KJV} Know ye not, that

to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to

whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto

righteousness?

‑ - 2 Peter 2:19 (KJV) - 2 Peter 2:19 KJV} While they

promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption:

for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

‑ Whoever owns the slave, owns ALL they possess.

‑ Father bought the son a car (HEC/Guitar), the boy gave it away. The

father could not take the car back.

Gloriously given, legally lost.

- Luke 4:6 (KJV) - Luke 4:6 KJV} And the devil said unto

him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that

is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

‑ Power ‑ G1849, exousia, ex‑oo‑see'‑ah, authority. Jesus never said,

"It's not yours!"

Vol 18:17

III. Kingdom authority has been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a man. (righteously regained)

Vol 18:20

He came as He did, to be what He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (was)

He was what He was to do what He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (did)

He did what He did so we might have what we have,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (dominion)

‑ We do not have what Adam had. He had dominion over nature. You

can't curse cancer. Hornets will STING you.

‑ - Hebrews 2:6 (KJV) - Hebrews 2:6 KJV} But one in a

certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of

him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a

little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and

honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast

put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in

subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But

now we see not yet all things put under him.

Not Yet Clause ‑ But now we see not yet all things put under him.

‑ - Romans 8:21 (KJV) - Romans 8:21 KJV} Because the

creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption

into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that

the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits

of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for

the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

‑ We are "waiting for the adoption."

Creature ‑ Creation

Vol 18:25:30

‑ Power & Authority.

Think of a 300 pound football player and a 150 pound referee. One has

strength. One has authority.

Police man ‑ authority. Truck ‑ Power. Stop!

IV. Kingdom authority must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

by man. (personally possessed)

- Luke 7:1 (KJV) - Luke 7:1 KJV} Now when he had ended all

his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick,

and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the

elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his

servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly,

saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he

loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. 6 Then Jesus

went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the

centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not

thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but

say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers,

and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he

cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

\*\*\* "You will never be over those things that God has set \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you until you

get under those things that God has set \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you."

(under and over)

‑ God does not give authority to rebels.

‑ In America, the big word is commitment. To commit, you must be in

control. The key word is not commitment but SURRENDER.

Vol 18:35:46

‑ Children that will not be under the authority of the dad, because

he has a "fuzz‑buster" because he will not be under the authority of

highway.

‑ Children will not be under the authority of the mother, because she

will not be under the authority of the father.

‑ The demon said to another, if those preachers understand kingdom

authority, hell help us, heaven will break loose! :)

Vol 18:38:30

‑ Someone stole AR boat. AR drove by and saw it for sale. He said

that's my boat and I'm taking it. The man, no! I'm selling it for

someone. AR ‑ Call the police. He didn't. My boat is back home.

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session XII Notes & thoughts:

/mPastors

/sAdrian Rogers ‑ What Every P2

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

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Session XIII

13. The Pastor's Personal Leadership

KEY ‑ Session XIII: Natural, Positional, Entrepreneurial, Spiritual,

message, ministry, Personal, Purpose, Persuasion, virtues, Integrity,

Spirituality, Humility, Charity, values, vision, insight, hindsight,

foresight, valor, objective, goals, strategies, plans, individuals,

your own family, build, lead, learn, love, lead, look, A, B, movers,

leaders, not known to you.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you

the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their

conversation" ( - Hebrews 13:7 KJV) - Hebrews 13:7 KJV}.

There are four basic kinds of leadership. None of them are bad in

themselves.

VOL19

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leadership. (Natural)

Natural born leaders.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leadership. (Positional)

‑ School teacher. Coach. Manager in McDonalds.

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leadership. (Entrepreneurial)

‑ These are the dreamers & schemers. Most pastors aspire for this

(BAD)! The pastor wants to be a CEO.

‑ If you are this kind of leader, you will be in competition with

other entrepreneurial in the church. If you have bankers, and you have

money skills. Lawyer, builder, there's a competition that may occur.

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leadership. (Spiritual)

‑ You are a man of God in a league all yourself. They will not

compare themselves to you.

"You develop the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, God will develop the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (message, ministry)

There are three basic principles of spiritual leadership:

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principle (Personal)

(Who he is).

VOL19:6

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principle (Purpose)

(Where he is headed).

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principle (Persuasion)

(Who is following him).

VOL19:8

I. The Personal PrincipleWho he is.

1. His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (virtues)

A. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Integrity)

B. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Spirituality)

C. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Humility)

God doesn't bless peacocks.

VOL19:10.31

D. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Charity)

‑ You love people

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2. His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (values)

‑ Life isn't a choice of good and bad but it's good versus BEST.

It's values.

‑ Talking parakeet. Cage ‑ $20. Still not talking. Swing ‑ $15. Still

not talking. Mirror ‑ $10. Still not talking. Ladder ‑ $20. Still not

talking. Bell ‑ $15. Finally talked. "Don't they sell bird seed? Then

he died.

We must feed our people. :)

3. His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vision)

"Vision is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ based on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that leads to

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_."

(insight, hindsight, foresight)

"Vision is INSIGHT based on HINDSIGHT that leads to FORESIGHT."

Disney World ‑ Mrs. Disney ‑ I wish Walt could have seen this. He

did. That's why it's here.

"At the grand opening of the Walt Disney World complex in Orlando,

the architect who designed the megacomplex stood next to Lilian

Disney, Walt Disney's widow. As he absorbed the grandeur of the

complex, the architect exclaimed, "wow! Mrs. Disney, I wish Walt could

have seen this." Turning towards the architect, she replied, "He did!

That's why it's here."

\webpage{http://setwatchman.com/2011/07/08/the‑power‑of‑a‑dream} See it.

Say it.

Show it.

Vision comes from walking with God, keeping your heart open.

VOL19:20

4. His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (valor)

II. The Purpose PrincipleWhere he is headed.

‑ The original story was that someone found this on a tombstone

buried deep in the grass. Upon pushing the grass aside, he read:

Pause, stranger, when you pass me by,

For as you are, so once was I.

As I am now, so will you be.

Then prepare unto death, and follow me.

Pushing the grass aside a bit more, he found the following scratched

on the stone, done with a crude instrument:

To follow you I'm not content

Until I know which way you went!

:)

\webpage{http://seniors‑site.com/funstuff/epitaphs.html

1. Have an overarching \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (objective)

Sample purpose statement:

Our church exists for the purpose of: Magnifying Jesus through worship

and the Word. Making Jesus known to our neighbors and the nations.

Moving believers in Jesus toward ministry and maturity.

2. Set specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (goals)

3. Implement creative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (strategies)

‑

4. Initiate definite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (plans)

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28.40

III. The persuasion principlewho is following him.

1. You should mentor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (individuals)

Ask God for someone that you can personally mentor.

2. You should lead and guide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (your own family)

The pastor is both the priest and prophet at the home.

3. You should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your team. (build,

lead)

You have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your team. (learn)

You have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your team. (love)

You have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your team. (lead)

You have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to your team. (look)

Class A people will choose Class \_\_\_\_ people, Class B people will

choose Class \_\_\_\_ people.

(A, B)

VOL19:33

How do you keep your church strong? Have as many "Class A" people on

the top line as you can.

Move with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; lead the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(movers, leaders)

‑ Keep moving forward. Some will be left behind. You may move so far

ahead, you will not hear them crying and complaining.

4. You must recognize that you have leadership that is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (not known to you)

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Session XIII Notes & thoughts:

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Session XIV

14. Practical Ideas For Your Ministry

KEY ‑ Session XIV: pace, Treasure, grow, delegate, yours to do,

counseling, prioritize, spiritual, management, one time, big rocks,

appointed, excuses, price, criticism, spot, No, notes, punctual,

stretch, File, first, speed, ongoing, Well begun, discipleship,

evangelism, creative, excellence, depth, breadth, preparation,

repeated, challenged, women.

VOL20

1. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ yourself. (See Appendix, Page 84) (pace)

In all natural things, you are to be spiritual. In spiritual things,

you are to be natural. Be real.

\*\*\*

PACE:

Spiritually = Praise, Acceptance, Control & Expectation.

Praise ‑ Worship

Acceptance ‑ Confess

Control ‑ I am going to go where you want.

Expectation ‑ great day!

To rejoice is a choice.

Emotionally & Physically

Posture ‑ feel better, look better. It's not humility.

Attitude ‑ Stay positive. Don't be negative.

Countenance ‑ If you happy, tell your face about it. A smile is a

passport about anywhere.

Enthusiasm ‑ God in you! He gave Himself for us so He could give

Himself to us.

Socially

Praise ‑ Be a 2 minute blessing to someone. Praise them.

Acceptance ‑ Move Toward Them

Concern ‑ How's your day been. Ask about them.

Encouragement ‑ Bless them. Lift them up.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your ideas. Ideas are fragile and powerful at the

same time. (Treasure)

3. Help others to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (grow)

At Bill Bright's funeral, Bailey Marks said that Bill Bright had five

questions:

A. To the lost "Have you personally experienced God's love and plan

for your life?

B. To the saved"Have you discovered the Spirit‑filled life?"

C. To college students "Are you willing to go anywhere and do

anything for Jesus Christ?"

D. To businessmen "Are you using your influence for Jesus Christ?"

E. To staff "What can I do to help you?"

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4. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (delegate)

Never do anything you can get another to do. It is better to get ten

to work than to do the work of ten. You do the major things and

delegate the minor.

\*\*\*

Evaluate

Eliminate

Delegate

What's left is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ . (yours to do)

5. Manage \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (counseling)

A. Schedule back‑to‑back appointments. Keep notes of your counseling.

B. Schedule counseling around times when you must be at the church

anyway.

C. Learn to counsel on the spot. Don't do it standing up. Sit down

face to face.

D. Prescribe reading assignments or activities.

6. Pray early and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your day. (prioritize)

Time is like money. You can't spend for everything you want.

If I don't know my priorities, everyone I meet will set them for me.

7. Don't manage \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things and don't try to spiritualize

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things. (spiritual, management)

8. If there are drop‑in visitors who spend too much time, take them

with you on a ministry assignment.

9. Handle most mail and paperwork only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (one

time)

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10. Have periodic times of planninga "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_"

conference. (big rocks)

Don't plan each event as it presents itself. Put the big rocks in

first.

VOL20:25

Put the big rocks in first. Gravel, sand, water. Returned your phone

calls. Call them back to back. Have the secretary call. How can I

help?

11. Try to return your calls at an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ time back to

back. (appointed)

A. Have the secretary answer some.

B. Have an associate answer others.

C. Move up the agenda when talking. A greeting and then ask this

question:

"How may I help you?" or "What can I do for you?"

12. Don't whine, don't complain, and stop making \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(excuses)

13. Pay the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (price)

‑"The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of

cheap price has been forgotten."

14. Pass the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as well as the praise, on to Jesus.

(criticism)

VOL20:30.13

15. Pray with people on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so you won't forget. (spot)

16. Learn to say, "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_," gracefully. (No)

17. Make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to yourself. (notes)

"The weakest ink is better than the strongest memory."

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18. Learn to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Think of being on time as late.

(punctual)

19. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your time. (stretch)

A. Drive and listen to tapes or CDs.

B. Carry reading materials with you.

C. Sign certificates during phone calls.

20. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, don't pile materials. Have someone to do filing for

you. (File)

21. Have your secretary prepare you for personal conferences and phone

calls that are scheduled.

22. Do the things that you dislike \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "If you have three

frogs to swallow, swallow the big one first." (first)

23. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ read. Twenty percent of the book has the

real content. (speed)

38:

24. Be more careful about taking \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ commitments rather than

one‑time commitments. (ongoing)

25. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is half done. (Well begun)

Procrastination is a form of disobedience.

26. Stay balanced between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (discipleship, evangelism)

Which wing of a bird is the most important?

27. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, keep your mind open to new experiences.

(creative)

Learn something from every acquaintance and experience.

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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28. Aim for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Quality produces quantity. (excellence)

29. Develop the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of your ministry and let God develop

the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (depth, breadth)

40:

30. Strong \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will give you great confidence.

(preparation)

31. If you don't want it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, don't say it. (repeated)

32. Keep your people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (challenged)

Soldiers in the barracks may bicker and fight with one another, but

soldiers on the battlefield

stay unified because they need one another.

33. Never be behind closed doors alone with another \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

other than your wife or

family member. (women)

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session XIVNotes & thoughts:

Appendix

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Sample SermonOutline

Disc 5, Session VIIPart 2, The Sermon Preparation

This sample sermon, as preached by Adrian Rogers, is an example to be

used for study. This page gives the outline, including the sermon's

four main points, along with the three subpoints of each main point.

The following 12 pages contain the actual sermon notes that Adrian

Rogers prepared and used when he preached this sermon.

The video of this sermon is also included on Disc 5. We recommend that

you watch the video with the actual notes in front of you.

How To Be A Fully Committed Disciple Of Christ

- Luke 14:25‑35 - Luke 14:25‑35

I. Disciples must worship at any cost.

Luke 14:2627: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and

mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and

his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not

bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

1. At the cost of personal relationships.

2. At the cost of personal reputation.

3. At the cost of personal realization.

II. Disciples must work at any cost.

Luke 14:2830: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth

not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to

finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not

able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This

man began to build, and was not able to finish."

1. The life we build must be spiritually conceived.

2. Your life should be sacrificially constructed.

3. Your tower should be steadfastly completed.

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III. Disciples must war at any cost.

- Luke 14 - Luke 14}: 3132: "Or what king, going to make war

against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether

he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with

twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he

sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

1. Jesus wants warriors who are not cowards.

2. Jesus wants warriors who are not compromisers.

3. Jesus wants warriors who are not cautious.

IV. Disciples must witness at any cost.

Luke 14:3435: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour,

wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor

yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear,

let

him hear."

1. Salt speaks of witness and testimony.

2. A true disciple will be like salt. What does salt do?

A. Salt preserves.

B. Salt flavors.

C. Salt heals.

D. Salt burns (on the DVD, Dr. Rogers skipped this point, probably

due to lack of time)

E. Salt penetrates.

3. Salt however, may lose its potency.

Conclusion

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Keeping Pace

Keeping Pace Spiritually

P raise I praise You that You've given Yourself for me.

A cceptance I accept that You've given Yourself to me.

C ontrol I place myself under Your control that You might live Your

life through Me.

E xpectation I expect that it's going to be a great day as I live my

life with You.

Keeping Pace Personally

P osture I need to stand straight.

A ttitude I need to be positive.

C ountenance I need to look pleasant.

E nthusiasm I need to project vitality.

Keeping Pace Socially

P raise Find something to compliment.

A cceptance Greet with enthusiasm.

C oncern Ask about their situation.

E ncouragement Leave them with a blessing.

Appendix

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What Every Pastor Ought To Know

Answer Key

Introduction:

Session I: elder, shepherd, bishop, maturity, ministry, management,

genuine experience, glowing enthusiasm, godly example, fade away,

strive for.

The Pastor As Elder:

Session II: blameless, character, undivided, hide, fear, Emotional,

heart, Intellectual, mind, Volitional, will, negative, self‑willed,

uncontrolled temper, uncontrolled appetites, violent, greedy,

positive, Hospitable, good, Self‑controlled, Upright, Holy,

Disciplined.

Session III: choice, right choices, wrong thing, Praying, Preaching,

evaluate, eliminate, delegate, family, Faithfulness, Love.

Session IV Part One: at home, equality, faith, roles, privilege,

responsibility, equals, covenant, contentment, little, bitterness,

hellish, human, heavenly, communication, disintegrate, skills,

self‑centered, Bitterness, Distractions, Fear, insecurity, roof,

walls, Busyness, sensitive, self‑centeredness, put right, fun, plans,

four dates, God, kids, yourself, mate, romance, courtship.

Session IV Part Two: leadership, example, firm, fun, fair, family

worship, house of God, prayer.

Session V: avoid sexual sin, Spirit, own marriage, priority, flesh,

unexpected, undetected, unprotected, wife, other women, consequences.

The Pastor As Shepherd:

Session VI: guards, guides, grows, pulpit, convicts, corrects,

constructs, confidence, consistency, courage, content.

Session VII: Topical, Textual, Expository, introduction, exposition,

conclusion, proposition, sermon, text, Word, experience, passage,

theme, pertinent, value, fear, life, positive, receives, practical,

needs, pointed, inform, transform, knowledge, lives, provocative,

plain, simple, persuasive, material, lesson, commandment, sin,

blessing, truth, topics, texts, quotations, illustrations, outline,

conclusion, application, introduce, notes, manuscript.

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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Session VIII: house, windows, known, unknown, literally illustrate,

punctuate, motivate, skyscraper, mindbender, sleep inducer, Plan,

alive, alert, Read, enlightenment, enjoyment, enrichment, devotional,

doctrinal, practical, enablement, ears, eyes, cathedrals, leadership,

creative, logical, heat, light, different, ideas, imagination,

solutions, creative, your own ideas, unusual, words, write, people,

authors.

Session IX: faultless, dirty, full, touch, task, preach, hear, fit,

fashionable, forceful, fresh, fitting.

Session X: courageously, clearly, concisely, convincingly,

cooperatively, consistently, creatively, compassionately,

convictionally, celebratively.

The Pastor As Bishop:

Session XI: procedural, body, head, manifested, ministering,

motivating, organism, mutual, pastor, responsibility, authority,

deacon, growth, problems, solutions, testimony, Spirit‑filled, wisdom,

deacon, may not, greater, committee, discover, develop, deploy,

congregationally.

Session XII: world, flesh, devil, external, internal, infernal,

gloriously given, legally lost, righteously regained, was, did,

dominion, personally possessed, under and over.

Session XIII: Natural, Positional, Entrepreneurial, Spiritual,

message, ministry, Personal, Purpose, Persuasion, virtues, Integrity,

Spirituality, Humility, Charity, values, vision, insight, hindsight,

foresight, valor, objective, goals, strategies, plans, individuals,

your own family, build, lead, learn, love, lead, look, A, B, movers,

leaders, not known to you.

Session XIV: pace, Treasure, grow, delegate, yours to do, counseling,

prioritize, spiritual, management, one time, big rocks, appointed,

excuses, price, criticism, spot, No, notes, punctual, stretch, File,

first, speed, ongoing, Well begun, discipleship, evangelism, creative,

excellence, depth, breadth, preparation, repeated, challenged, women.

Appendix

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Notes & thoughts:

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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Notes & thoughts:

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Vol21

‑ Devotion ‑ give your BEST time (for me ‑ not early am)

23:

\*\*\*

Our Purpose (Driven)

Magnify ‑ thru Worship

Moving Toward Maturity

Making Jesus Known

HEC - My inspiration for a new book... \*\*\*

‑ The Prayer of Jabez for the Purpose Driven Life So You Won't Be Left Behind :)

I preached:

Hell Hot

Heaven Sweet

Judgement Sure &

Jesus Saves

Kelly Fellows (Foursquare)

REAL

Recognize that your flawed

Relationships

Exchange coats

Adjust my attitude

Alert

Love Genuinely

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mDiscipleship

/sAdrian Rogers

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

/t

/fN

Discipleship

- Luke 14:26 (KJV) - Luke 14:26 KJV} If any man come to me,

and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and

brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my

disciple.

Salvation Is Free but Discipleship Costs

\*‑ Worship Any Cost (Crucifixion)

- Luke 14:27 (KJV) - Luke 14:27 KJV} And whosoever doth not

bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Family (hate)

Crucified life

‑ face one way (only going in one direction)

‑ said goodbye (will not go back)

‑ no future plans of their own

Difference in self denial & denial of self

‑ Peter left nets (self denial)

‑ Peter had to leave Peter ( denial of self)

Jesus called the shots

\*‑ Worship Any Cost (Crucifixion)

\* Work at Any Cost (Construction)

- Luke 14:28 (KJV) - Luke 14:28 KJV} For which of you,

intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the

cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to

finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Count Cost ‑ Tower

The reason some people do not want to volunteer ‑ "don't want to be

tied down" disciples. Are nailed down

\*‑ Worship Any Cost (Crucifixion)

\* Work at Any Cost (Construction)

V30‑31 \* War at Any Cost

‑ Ill: Men We Are Surrounded by the Enemy ‑ Don't Let one of them Get

Away :)

No compromise

- Luke 14:32 (KJV) - Luke 14:32 KJV} Or else, while the

other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth

conditions of peace.

‑ Don't compromise ‑ man going to shoot a bear for fur coat. Bear

says wait ‑ I just want a meal. I know How we can have both. So the

bear had a meal & the man had a fur coat (inside the bear)

V33 no Caution

- Luke 14:33 (KJV) - Luke 14:33 KJV} So likewise, whosoever

he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my

disciple.

\*‑ Worship Any Cost (Crucifixion)

\* Work at Any Cost (Construction)

\* War at Any Cost

V34‑35 Commission ‑ Witness at Any Cost

- Luke 14:34 (KJV) - Luke 14:34 KJV} Salt is good: but if

the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men

cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Salty

‑ Sodomy ‑ First ‑ a sin ‑ then a sickness (DSM3 left out dsm4) ‑ now

socially Accepted

‑ sin not problem (porn, etc)

‑ saltlessness prob

Bland lead the bland

Prob we do not...

W... At any cost

"

"

"

Will you be a disciple

The problem is that we do not ‑ Worship Any Cost (Crucifixion)

The problem is that we do not ‑ Work at Any Cost (Construction)

The problem is that we do not ‑ War at Any Cost

The problem is that we do not ‑ Witness at Any Cost

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10 Tips for Better Preaching - Jim Martin

- 9/2011.101

10 Tips for Better Preaching

Jim Martin

Godhungry.org

In this two‑part series on better preaching, Jim Martin offers ten

tips for more effective preaching every Sunday. Email this

articlePrint FriendlyThe following are ten suggestions that can make a

significant difference in preaching. As I write these, I have in mind

in particular those preachers/teachers who address the same

congregation of people every week.

1. Communicate to the people in your church that you love them.

You do this through your words, manner, and tone of voice. After all,

these people are not a platform to be used to launch you toward

something bigger and better. They are a precious local expression of

the body of Christ. If they think you really dont love them, what you

say in a sermon will be greatly discounted.

2. Seek clarity not obscurity in preaching.

No, not all of the fruit must be low hanging. People need to hear a

word from God. Many people come to church after a week of just trying

to survive. Some preachers might be stunned if they were to see a

composite list of all the difficulty and turmoil these people

experienced that week.

3. Resist the temptation to trot out every new thought in this Sunday

s sermon.

Some ideas and thoughts need to spend time slowly cooking in the

crockpot rather than being prematurely presented on a Sunday morning.

4. Be careful about regularly communicating that you are different

from the rest of the people in the congregation.

For example, a preacher needs to be careful about belittling a local

favorite, such as a favorite food. This preacher may do this in an

attempt at humor. Such an attempt can easily backfire and can

communicate that you really dont value what they value. A similar

mistake is to regularly talk about how much better things are back

home instead of here. Sure it is fine to have your own opinions.

However, one may unnecessarily use up some goodwill with such remarks.

5. Passion alone does not make a sermon.

However, when a preacher rarely preaches with passion, one wonders how

important the message is to that preacher. Passion is not turning red

in the face or yelling at the congregation. Passion is what emerges

from a preacher when there is a strong sense of importance to this

message. When one preaches with passion, one senses the earnestness

and the listener senses that this message is very important. Where

does passion come from? Prayer. Thought. Reflection on Gods word. One

s own relationship with God. Passion begins to emerge as you realize

what is at stake in this message.

6. Talk to people as if they are intelligent (they are) but resist the

urge to prepare a sermon for a seminary professor.

You are now before the people of the congregation. You are not trying

to impress your professor. You are trying to connect with a group of

people who have a variety of problems and who are engaged in a number

of professions. This doesnt mean that you must dumb down your

preaching. It does mean that you need to work hard for clarity.

When I was almost finished with my DMin degree, I received a call one

day from one of my professors. He said he and his wife were going to

be in our assembly the following Sunday. He wanted to hear me preach.

After hearing that he was going to visit, I panicked. I wondered if I

should not toss my sermon into the trash and start over.

Fortunately, I caught myself and realized I was preparing to preach to

one person instead of preaching to the people who would be gathered in

our assembly.

7. Note the importance of ethos.

Your genuiness and goodness are incredibly important. No longer will

people listen simply because you are the preacher and you have been to

seminary. For many people today, your credibility will first come from

your life and godliness.

8. Present the opposing view as if very intelligent, good people

believe this.

In other words, dont make fun of the opposing view or talk as if

those who hold such a view are obviously not intelligent, thoughtful,

or spiritual. When presenting an opposing view, present the strongest

argument for that view, not the weakest. In other words, you may not

agree with the view but you can respect those who happen to hold that

view.

9. If you want people to take you seriously, then do nothing that

might give them reason not to.

Remember that preaching is a matter of trust and credibility.

Preaching that deals with Jesus, sin, suffering, doubt, faith is

deeply personal. Very often your hearers will listen not only with

their ears but in some of the most tender places in their hearts. They

are allowing you, as you handle the Word of God, to speak to their

hearts. They are trusting you to walk gently and to handle the Word of

God as a skillful surgeon. They trust your integrity and authenticity.

(This is one reason why it is devastating for a member of the

congregation to learn that their preacher is committing adultery. They

have given that preacher much trust and it turns out this person has

not been living a trustworthy life.)

10. Take your preaching seriously and yourself less seriously.

Remember that most any preacher can be heard through podcasts or some

sort of digital recording. Dont panic when the congregation starts

quoting a nationally known preacher after listening to his latest

podcast. Be glad they are learning and growing.

When you make mistakes, laugh at yourself. Your laughter will put them

at ease and they will more readily connect with you. Admitting your

mistakes and laughing at yourself will actually help you bond with the

church.

Jim Martin

Godhungry.orgJim Martin is the lead pastor of Crestview Church of

Christ in Waco, Texas. He's married to Charlotte and has two

daughters. He enjoys coffee, biking, and grilling most anything. Read

more on his blog: Godhungry.org.

Pt.1

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Pt. 2

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/jim‑ma

rtin‑10‑tips‑for‑better‑preaching‑pt‑2‑1030.asp

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Listen to Your Message Before You Preach It - Mark Mohler

Listen to Your Message Before

- 9/2011.101

Listen to Your Message Before You Preach It - Mark Mohler

MarkMohler.Wordpress.com

Sermons are not made for paper; they are made for people. We should

listen before we preach.Email this articlePrint FriendlyHow can a

sermon that looks so good on paper be such a flop Sunday morning? Your

exegesis was flawless; you would have been proud to present it to your

seminary hermeneutics professor. Your advanced homiletics professor

would have raved over the mechanics, outline, illustrations,

introduction and conclusions. You even practiced your voice inflection

and stage movements. So why didnt anyone listen?

I have a hunch that you made the mistake many preachers make: in an

attempt to write a grade‑A sermon, you forgot your task was to preach

it, not produce it on paper.

Sermons are not made for paper; they are made for people. They are to

be listened to. Just like Ford test‑drives any prototype before they

produce the vehicle, you should test‑drive your sermon by listening to

it before you preach it. Either audibly or silently, you must seek to

hear it as the people in the pew will hear it, listening for the

following aspects, knowing that when they are clearly identified you

will be one step closer to preaching a sermon people will listen to.

Listen for Content

What Biblical content are you presenting? People want to hear a

message from the Lord through a sermon based on Scripture. It could be

that people are losing interest because they do not hear the voice of

God coming through the expounded Word of God. You must preach the

Word ( - 2 Timothy 4:2 - 2 Timothy 4:2}) before you step into

the pulpit; listen to your sermonare you hearing a clear presentation

of Biblical material?

What else are you saying? Unless you stand and read Scripture for the

allotted preaching time, you will be adding something else. Listen to

your spoken content, the body of your sermon. What are you saying

that people need to hear? Does your sermons body match the Scripture?

It could be that people stop listening because they do not feel like

there is anything to listen to. Before you preach, imagine a husband

whose wife guilted him into coming to church instead of fishing with

his visiting Navy buddy. What content are you presenting that will

make him leave feeling glad he was there?

Listen for Clarity

Have you ever noticed a vast difference between traveling with a GPS

and stopping to ask for directions at a gas station? The

voice‑enhanced GPS instructs you with phrases like, At the next

intersection, turn leftnow turn left. The gas station attendant

says, Go down the road a bit, you will see a big tree Clarity.

People stop listening when they are no longer able to follow. Your

sermon must be clear, your explanation must be clear, your

illustrations must be clear, your exhortations to transformed life

must be clear. Imagine your chairman of deacons falling asleep

mid‑sermon. His wife nudges him awake. In thirty seconds, at any given

moment in your sermon, will he be able to jump in and know exactly

what you are talking about? People will listen when they hear clearly.

Listen for Connection

I have a three‑year‑old little girl who we jokingly say speaks

Emmanese. She has the habit of making up words whose meanings are

only known only to her. Listening to her is amusing, but it is

frustrating because you really have no idea what she is attempting to

communicate. There is no connection between her message and her

listener. For people to listen they must hear the connection. Here is

a surprisemost people do not care that George Mueller prayed and

started orphanages. They are not starting orphanages. They have

teenagers whose lives are going bust. Next Sunday, there will be in

attendance a wife whose husband told her the night before that he has

been having an affair. There is a man who's just received lay‑off

papers. Your task as a preacher is to declare the Word in such a way

that you connect their life to the Biblical message. Illustrations

about dead saints are good, but people must hear something that looks

very much like their life if you are going to hold their attention.

Listen for Creativity

Other than your Scripture and subject, what is different about your

sermon this week than last week? People listen when you are creative.

You must remember that people these days are engaged visually much

more than intellectually. Proofdo you remember film day in your

second grade class? When my second grade teacher showed a film, the

projector displayed still images and the audio came via a record

player. When my son, who is starting kindergarten, has film day, he

will watch a flat‑screen television displaying computer‑animated

characters. We must be creative, adding visual elements and variation

in our presentations. The sermon should not depend on them, but

enhancing it with these elements will help keep people engaged.

Listen for a Call for Action

What is the ultimate goal for the listener? What do you want people to

do? While conversing with a lady from my church, she said, Brother

Mark, I really liked your sermon, but I am not sure what I am supposed

to do. People might not want to be told what to do, but they

appreciate your efforts in suggesting how life can be real world

different on Monday based on the Scripture they studied Sunday. For

example, if your subject is a deep appreciation of the relationship we

have with Jesus, which of the following calls to action would make a

greater impact? (1) Now go home and spend some time thanking Jesus

for your relationship with Him or (2) On your way home today, look

for fifteen things that you see that you would enjoy but do not have

and cannot afford. When you pull in your driveway, ask yourself which

of these things, or the combination of these things, would you forfeit

your relationship with Jesus to attain?

As preachers we are given a great task: proclaiming the inspired Word

of God. Our part in the process is to allow the Spirit to lead us into

sermons that connect and to which people listen. It will enhance your

effectiveness if you listen to your sermon before anyone else, seeking

to ensure that the necessary elements are in place. Do not do this so

you will be a better preacher; do it so people will listen to the

life‑changing message of the Bible.

Mark Mohler

MarkMohler.Wordpress.comMark is the senior pastor at New Bethel

Missonary Baptist Church in Benton, KY. He is married to Shawna and

has two children, Garett and Emma. His passion is preaching and

leading believers into a missional lifestyle.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/mark‑m

ohler‑listen‑to‑your‑message‑before‑you‑preach‑it‑1049.asp?utm\_source=n

ewsletter&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

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Guest Preachers - Do You Know the 4 Pillars of Guest Preaching? - Pete Wilson

9/2011.101

Do You Know the 4 Pillars of Guest Preaching?

Pete Wilson

WithoutWax.tv

Pete Wilson: "Dont make controversial statements the church staff is

going to have to clean up later."Email this articlePrint FriendlyOver

the past couple of years Ive done a lot of guest speaking at

churches. I consider it a great honor to give friends a break who may

be out getting some much needed rest. I also learn a ton while

visiting other churches. So many different things weve implemented

at Cross Point over the years have come from my visits to other

churches.

This past weekend I had the opportunity to speak at Central Christian

in Vegas for my good friend Jud Wilhite. I cant say enough good

things about what this church is doing under Juds leadership.

Unbelievable!!

With each opportunity Ive had to visit your churches there are a

couple things Im picking up on. I dont have this whole guest

speaking thing down, but heres what I want to share:

First of all I want to address those of you who do guest speaking from

time to time.

To Guest Speakers:

1) Dont go over your allotted time. Period.

I dont care how inspired you feel. You have no idea the issues

(parking, service turnover, takedown, childcare) you create when you

dont follow the time frame theyve given you.

2) Dont make controversial statements the church staff is going to

have to clean up later.

Your \*funny\* joke may have cost the pastor hours of meetings. If you

feel led to stir the water a bit do it on your own platform, not

theirs. Theyve probably spent years intentionally building integrity

with their community and attenders. You have the power to put that in

jeopardy in one 30‑minute message.

3) Respect the methodology of the church youre speaking in.

Its quite simple. Take time to understand their protocol. If they

do altar calls each week then you need to do an altar call. If they

dont, then you dont. If you like to use outlines but their church

never uses outlines, then take a pass and find a way to communicate

your message without using an outline. If you cant jive with their

methodology than you shouldnt have accepted the request in the first

place.

4) Take a moment to give honor and respect to the pastor and staff,

but dont overdo it.

I think its important to recognize the pastor and his leadership.

Say for him what in his humble spirit he would never say about

himself. But at the end of the day make sure you put the focus of the

message where it really needs to be, which is on Christ.

To Guest Speaker Listeners:

Its confession time. While I appreciate your kind words and praise

you need to know something:

I brought my silver bullet. Chances are I gave my best message Ive

written in the past two years. If I were assigned a topic, I ignored

it and still gave my favorite message in the past two years.

No, seriously, if I were assigned the topic, I still probably had

several weeks or months to prepare and work in my favorite

illustrations and zingers. Your pastor, who pounds out new messages

week after week, hes the real hero and hes probably twice the

communicator I am.

What communication tips do you have for guest speakers?

Pete Wilson

WithoutWax.tvPete Wilson is the founding pastor of Cross Point Church

in Nashville, TN and author of a new book entitled Plan B, his

thoughts about what to do when life doesnt turn out the way you

thought it would. He is a frequent blogger on his popular ministry

blog, WithoutWax.tv. Pete is married and has three sons.

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5 Things We Do Instead of Preach - James MacDonald

- 9/2011.101

5 Things We Do Instead of Preach

James MacDonald: 5 Things We Do Instead of Preach the Word

James MacDonald

JamesMacdonald.com

James MacDonald: 5 Things We Do Instead of Preach the WordEmail this

articlePrint FriendlyExcerpted from his talk given at the Acts 29 Lead

Pastors' Retreat in June 2011:

I wish I could tell you that most pastors are preaching the word. I

can't some are not preaching the word. So here's five things we may

choose to do instead of preaching the word.

1. Entertaining

"Music, drama, and video, felt needs, topics, more stories"

None of those things are wrong unless they displace the preaching of

the word of God. Some teachers will tell you that you need to tell

stories in your sermons or you will bore people. I'm not bored. If

you're not bored, no one is going to be bored. Can you take hold of

the word of God and take hold of a group of people and make them

listen because you have something to say?

Are you bored? The greatest sin in ministry is to bore people with the

Bible. Martin Lloyd Jones said, "Preaching is theology coming through

a man who is on fire. A man who can speak about these things

dispassionately has no right whatsoever to be in a pulpit; and should

never be allowed to enter one."

You have to get the word of God, let it grip you heart by the power of

the Holy Spirit and drive over to church with something to say.

Now if a story fits in, I might tell you a story before I sit down,

but don't make that your thing. If people come up to you afterwards

and say, "I love that story you told," it should make you crazy.

Really, that's what I am? I'm a story‑teller? The Gospel is the main

story that you should be telling.

2. Sharing

We hear a pastor say, "There's some things I just want to share with

you today..."

Since when is the man of God some Dr. Phil and Oprah combo? You're

supposed to proclaim a message. If you're not preaching, glory is not

coming down. You have got to preach the glory down people have to

hear a word from God.

3. Wooing

"Careful, careful, don't offend, always comfortable, never pressured,

just a pinch of truth, when they're ready to handle it"

The preaching of the gospel has become so watered down that the

non‑elect can't even reject it.

If you don't have people walking away from your ministry saying, "this

is a hard word, who can accept it?" then you don't have a ministry

like Jesus had.

I just hate this notion that we can be so clever and sophisticated

that we can remove the offense from the gospel. It is foolishness to

those who are perishing, it is the power of God to those who are being

saved. It is the aroma of death to those who are perishing, it is the

aroma of life to those who are being saved.

Listen, preacher: If you don't want to be the aroma of death to those

who are perishing, you can never be the aroma of life to those who are

being saved. That's why preaching is hard work.

4. Intellectualizing

"I've been thinking and researching this in the original languages..."

We're supposed to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength.

And preaching that stops at the shoulders is defective preaching. It

has to move me it has to call me to action mind, emotions, and

will. If you're just preaching your theological construct, you're

blowing it.

Stop preaching the scaffolding around the Bible and preach the word

what God actually says.

John Calvin said, "God deigns [considers it proper] to consecrate to

himself the mouths and tongues of men in order that his voice may

resound in them." Your preaching is at its best when your people have

forgotten that you're even standing there, and God's Spirit is moving

through you. I am afraid that we've lost sight of this.

5. Abbreviating

"Twenty minute sermons"

I don't know how it works at your church, but for us it takes 5

minutes to set the rig up and another 5 or 10 minutes to take it down.

If you're only preaching for 20 minutes, that gives you 5 minutes to

drill. You're not going very deep, are you? It takes some time.

- Romans 10:16 - Romans 10:16} Jesus said, "He who hears you,

hears me."

"He who hears you," Jesus said, "hears me."

Yet there's no pridefulness, is there? It's so humbling. It's a

crushing weight, isn't it? I tell people the weekly message

preparation is the crucible of my sanctification. Never get in a habit

of getting up in the pulpit when things aren't square everywhere. That

by itself will keep you going in the right direction. "He who hears

you, hears me," Jesus said. I love that challenge to be that person.

James MacDonald

JamesMacdonald.comJames MacDonald (D. Min. Phoenix Seminary) is the

founding senior pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel, leads the church

planting ministry of Harvest Bible Fellowship, teaches the practical

application of God's Word on the Walk in the Word radio broadcast, and

is a gifted author and speaker.

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Improve Your Powerpoint Presentation Skills by Liz Banks

November 21, 2008 under Presentation Skills

- 9/2011.101

Improve Your Powerpoint Presentation Skills

Published by Liz Banks on November 21, 2008 under Presentation Skills

Good afternoon and today I am going to present my thirty slides on

. .. This common presentation opening is now sounding increasingly

more like an apology. As soon as the presenter starts to speak they

sense that the audiences reaction is to brace themselves for the

endurance test that lies ahead. There is an inevitable underlying

feeling from both parties that before long the audience will go into

PowerPoint Switch‑Off mode.

Its therefore time to take stock and remind ourselves what exactly

is the purpose of PowerPoint this supposedly supportive presentation

skills aid?

In this article well be looking at some techniques to help you

achieve more in your next business powerpoint presentation.

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can help you or your team.

Is Powerpoint really a Quick‑Fix Solution?

At first, PowerPoint seemed to be the answer to all our presentation

concerns. To the less experienced presenter it became a great way to

put together a presentation. With its neat gadgets and easy‑to‑follow

structure, PowerPoint provided a quick fix solution to our

presentation anxieties. All the presenter needed to do was to

deliver their slides.

However the verb to deliver has become replaced by the phrase to

read out aloud and even by the phrase to hide behind which results

in a total switch off for our audiences.

Audience‑Friendly Powerpoint Slides

In order to help create a more postive experience for our audiences,

we need to look at what we put on our slides to ensure that they are

audience friendly ie designed for the audiences benefit. Slides

should support our message, not to be the message. They are meant to

be a visual aid visual being the operative word.

Less is more

You may think that the more information you put on a slide, the easier

it is to remember and present the information. However, the more text

you have on a slide the more you are restricted by the text. It means

that you have to present all the information on the slide and this

hinders your ability to be spontaneous or conversational with their

audience.

Attention grabbing slides

Fewer words say more and have far greater impact. Punchy phrases grab

attention and are easy to read at a glance. By reducing the amount of

information you have on a slide you give yourself more flexibility to

interpret the slide and relate the information to a particular

audience.

A few key words or phrases will give you the necessary prompts you

need. You can see these prompts at a glance which means that you will

be able to spend more time engaging with your audience. Your audience

are less likely to read ahead and therefore more likely to listen to

you and maintain concentration.

Keep it clean!

Slides need to be clean and not over‑fussy. They need to be easily

read or seen by the whole audience. You shouldnt have to ask the

audience if they can read it at the back its too late to find

that they cant read the slide when you start your presentation you

need to have worked this out before!

Use a font size that is easy for the audience to read if the

audience cant read it then it shouldnt be there. Keep your fonts

consistent to one or two varieties at the most. This is much easier

for the audience to read and follow.

What Visual Aid to use?

A visual is an immediate way of conveying information to an audience.

Visual slides are also easier to talk around.

Simple and clearly labelled graphs are excellent means of simplifying

the presentation of data. Graphs are effective ways of showing

historical trends and patterns at a glance. Remember to use a large

enough font size for any numbers / words on the axes of the graphs so

that the audience can read easily them.

Pie charts and bar charts are very effective ways of conveying

information by use of colour and shading. Keep it simple though, as

too much colour or shading soon makes it difficult for the audience to

read at a glance. Restrict the colour to 3 colours maximum this is

enough to add variety but avoid becoming confusing and messy.

Pictures are very effective for communicating concepts and conveying

emotion. They encourage the audience to use their imagination hence

helping them maintain interest and stay switched on throughout the

presentation.

Avoid PowerPoint feature abuse!

Avoid over‑doing the technical wizardry in PowerPoint or using too

many fly in bullets in PowerPoint presentations they soon become

very predictable. If you adopt the less is more approach to using

text then you will not need to rely on fly‑ins to gradually reveal

information.

Simple dissolves in‑between slides can look professional but overuse

of some options quickly becomes very distracting. The audience will

end up paying more attention to the gimmicks than to the message that

you are trying to convey.

Are you a Polished Presenter or just a PowerPoint Operator?

The slick and polished nature of PowerPoint, whilst adding value to a

presentation when used appropriately, can also weaken the human input

in presenting. The presenters role can easily become reduced to no

more than the PowerPoint Operator. If a presenter lacks confidence

they may use the PowerPoint to hide behind. Public speaking is in

fact one of the most common public fears almost as strong as fear of

death!

Good delivery skills are very important to help provide us the much

desired confidence needed for us to be a polished and professional

presenter. We have to re‑learn the meaning of delivery. It is not

reading off the slide or hiding behind your laptop, it is all about

the art of communication and the ability to command and engage with

your audience.

Delivery skills can be learnt in fact most good presenters spend a

lot of time practising their delivery techniques to help them develop

into confident and effective presenters.

Project a strong personal presence

A strong personal presence is very important especially when you are

competing with a large screen behind you. Poor stance, irritating

habits, lack of eye contact will all inhibit your ability to engage

with your audience.

A common mistake is that the the PowerPoint presenter anchors

themself to their laptop throughout the presentation. This gives the

impression that they are saying to their audience Dont look at me

Im not important Im just an accessory to the equipment.

Define your space

To avoid feeling insignificant by the technology and the large screen

behind you, move to a space away from the equipment when you first

start your presentation. This should ideally be nearer to the

audience. This will help you build rapport with the audience at the

start. It will also give the impression that it is you who is

controlling the presentation rather than the PowerPoint controlling

you.

Make a strong last impression

Likewise, at the end of the presentation, move away from the

equipment towards the audience to establish a strong final

impression. Make sure that your last slide is the image that you want

to leave your audience with or, alternatively, leave a blank slide or

switch off the PowerPoint before you finish.

Slowdown the PowerPoint slide changes

Another common contributor to the PowerPoint Switch‑Off is the

endless stream of rapid slide changes that can occur in a presentation

with too many slides delivered too quickly. When this happens it doesn

t take long to see that fixed glazed expression on the audiences

faces.

To avoid this, take your time to change slides pause and allow the

audience to take in what is on the screen before speaking. The

audience need this time to assimilate what has just been said and to

absorb the information on the new slide before you start to speak. It

will also give you time to gather your thoughts before you begin to

speak.

Edit your slide show

Dont feel that you have to have a slide for everything you say. You

can deliver messages without any use of visual aids and it will be a

nice contrast to move away from the PowerPoint at certain times in

your presentation. When you have created your presentation it is a

good idea to eliminate the least important slide and do this a few

times until you only keep the most essential slides.

And remember to look at your audience!

Avoid showing the back of your head to the audience by looking back

at the screen for your prompts. If you do this your voice will trail

off as you turn your head away from the audience and this will reduce

the impact of your message.

We need to look at people give them eye contact if we want to fully

engage with them. Use your laptop, rather than the screen to take your

prompts.

Ensure that your laptop is arranged carefully in front of you so that

you are facing the audience when you look at it. Alternatively, use

easy‑to‑read notes or prompt cards to give you the necessary prompts.

Polish the PowerPoint Practicalities

You also need to think about the practicalities of presenting your

PowerPoint presentation to ensure a polished, professional

performance.

Five key points to consider are:

1. Clearly state the length of your presentation at the start so that

your audience know exactly how long it will be. You must then stick to

your times to keep your audiences attention.

2. Be conversational with your audience ask them a few questions at

the start to open them up before plunging into the slide show. This

will help encourage a more personal environment and you will be able

to pitch your presentation more effectively to those present.

3. Identify the key benefits of your presentation to your audience .

Ask yourself why should your audience listen to you? Make it clear

at the start what your audience will gain from your presentation.

4. Ensure that you are properly set up before you start. Set up the

equipment in good time and make sure that you have tested it out so

there is not danger of things going wrong once you have started your

presentation.

5. Finally try to enjoy your presentation a presenter who looks as

it they are going to enjoy their presentation will send out the right

signals to their audience. And if your enjoy it your audience are

also more likely to!

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your‑powerpoint‑presentation‑skills.htm

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7 Axioms Of Sermon Delivery By Calvin Miller

- 9/2011.101

7 Axioms Of Sermon Delivery

The Seven Axioms Of Sermon Delivery

By Calvin Miller

Axiom #1: "The speech before the speech" is step one in audience

bonding.

The narrative exposition more than any other expository form relies on

bonding with the audience. This may be one of the very few preaching

texts you will read that will talk about this strategic first step in

pulpit communication. Bonding with an audience is both verbal and

nonverbal. The nonverbal elements of bonding have to do with

deportment, propriety, and an open demeanor. During those first

critical moments when the audience to be addressed first catches sight

of a speaker, the would‑be listeners are making up their minds as to

whether or not they will be listening.10At this point they have their

thumb on the channel surfers of their intent. Will they change

channels once the speaker has begun or will they change channels even

before the speaker begins?

Does the speaker look listenable?

Is the speaker sincere, amiable, and my kind of person?

Is the speaker dressed in a pleasing and non‑ostentatious style?

Is the speaker tattooed, dreadlocked, gushy, friendly, aloof, etc.?

First impressions pave or bar the way to being heard. My ministry is

largely itinerant these days, and so Sunday by Sunday I go from

denomination to denomination and church to church. In a day of

megachurch neuroses, I call the pastor to see how he dresses. Some

megachurches are casual, but fiercely so. If you show up in a tie

where the congregational detente is shorts and sandals, you will be

suspected of being elitist and out of touch with the grass roots, who

want to see the keynoter dressed for a disheveled and dowdy look. It

may seem a small issue in light of eternity, but it will be a huge

issue with those who believe the Holy Spirit only falls on the devoted

disciples in Tommy Bahama dress.

The opposite is also true: If the congregation is a "suit‑and‑tie"

gathering, they will believe that the Spirit is looking for a good

starched collar and a set of white gloves. To fail to pay attention to

this is to violate the nonverbal code of acceptance and will make

bonding more tenuous.

The most important issue of bonding has to do with the first words out

of the preacher's mouth. These should not be the first words of the

sermon's introduction. They proceed the sermon's first formal

thoughts. These words are the warm approaches to the first words of

the sermon. These words don't comment on the text. They don't flog the

audience toward rapt attention for all that the preacher intends to

say. They are the "Hi there" words that notice the world around them

and reach to the crowd with enough humanity so that the divinity being

stirred up may become instantly palatable.

These words reference the little things of life: the weather, the

Super Bowl, the choir which has just sung, the town in which the

church is situated, the tragedy that has filled the newspaper for the

week, the kindness the audience has extended, your admiration for the

leadership of the constituency, or the warm opinion you have of the

group who has come to listen to you.

The speech before the speech is not something you write down to say,

anymore than you would write down your remarks for a reception line.

You are there to acknowledge your openness and your joy in the

circumstances of your togetherness. It is simple stuff, but essential.

Without it, you will arrive too hurriedly at your private agenda.

Without it, you say to your audience, "As I see it, what I am about to

say, is more important than our friendship." When done with sincerity,

this axiom creates the bait for the important propositions with which

you hope to snare their interest.

Axiom #2: Don't ask for people's attention, command it.

The violation of this axiom is often born in our insecurity. Every

preacher I have ever known suffers from a common facet of low

self‑esteem: people are soon to quit listening to me. I planted a

church which in time grew to a couple of thousand listeners. When the

church was small, I suffered from the notion that I would arrive to

preach on Sunday and not a soul would be there. It never happened. Yet

I believed it would. Even as the church became a large congregation, I

would wake on Sunday morning wondering, Will anybody come today? Of

course, they did.

All speakers suffer from the notion that even when listeners are

present, are they really present? When they look like they're

listening, are they? And when they don't look like they're listening,

watch out, they probably aren't. One of the hedges against these fears

is to say things like "Listen up!" or "Will you give me your

attention?"

There are, of course, parts of a sermon that may need a special

emphasis on attention. If you are working through the Levitical

priesthood an understanding of which is essential to your working

through the book of Hebrews you may want to ask them to carefully

attend your words of explanation, because if they miss out on this

part of the sermon, what is to follow later will be unintelligible to

them.

But there is a difference between this kind of call to attention and

the kind which continually even habitually asks people to listen.

The continual saying of "Listen up!" grows from the preacher's

insecurity that they may not be listening, perhaps because the sermon

is poorly prepared and contains so little worth hearing, they have to

keep insisting that people listen as though they actually did.

The best remedy for asking for attention is to have something so vital

to say and to say it so well that people listen because they are

fascinated and need not be called to attention. Such preaching is

glorious. When the ear grows attached to the preacher's brain and

larynx, there is no need to ask for attention. Any call for it is like

bringing coals to Newcastle: the very call for it has been rendered

pointless by the preacher's passionate and content‑filled style.

Axiom #3: Move deliberately, don't meander.

The difference between a pond and a stream is mobility. Streams are

ever more fascinating than ponds, and nearly everyone I know prefers

white water to stagnant pools. This principle holds in the pulpit as

well. Preachers who move are more interesting than those who don't. I

realize that such a preacher's principle of pedagogy is widely

debated. More formal and liturgical congregations may want their

preachers to stay "behind the pulpit," and in older church buildings,

which have wineglass pulpits, they actually prefer the preacher to

climb in and out of "the barrel" for all godly pronouncements.

The first time I ever heard Norman Peale preach (and indeed, every

time I heard Peale preach) he left the divided lectern and lit out for

the center of a chancel and stood there, unseparated from his audience

by the pulpit barrier of eighty pounds of wood. Only oxygen came

between us as he preached to us. I was a young pastor the first time I

heard him, and I made a decision that if he could get by with that at

Marble Collegiate Church, I could also get by with it in the church I

was attempting to plant in Nebraska.

The best thing to be said of a pulpit is that (in spite of the fact it

hides the speaker) it does locate the preacher to one place. Some

preachers need that. Without the pulpit they become meandering

messengers who pace back and forth like a caged lion while they shout

out the words of their sermons. Pacing is bad, and it betrays the

preacher's nerves, setting all insecurities right out in the open for

all to see. But pulpits do not necessarily prevent the preacher from

becoming a roaming reverend. In fact, many preachers have developed a

peripatetic pedagogy just trying to abandon the pulpit. The trustees

will not allow these preachers to take the pulpit out of the

sanctuary, so they are forced to spend their years walking around it

in an attempt to get away from having it come between them and their

audiences.

This axiom champions the notion, that while movement is commanding,

pacing is not. So move deliberately. Take a few paces at planned

intervals, moving deliberately. Plant yourself in that position for a

few minutes of your sermon before you move easily to the next point

from which you deliver more of the message.

Above all, remember this: a chancel is to church what a stage is to

the theater. In the theater movements from upstage center to downstage

center is the most powerful kind of movements in terms of making the

playwright's words come alive. The same is true in the chancel.

Walking toward an audience when you are making a point has far more

effect than walking away from them toward the rear of the chancel. In

either the theater or the church, the weakest kind of communication

movement comes in moving from one side of the stage to the other.

But either actors or preachers should not wander about the stage.

Actors work at "blocking" or planning their movements. They realize

their position on the stage is part of their interpretation of the

role they play. I have never seen either King Lear or Hamlet do their

soliloquies from anywhere other than center stage. There is a reason

for that. The best of preachers know what the reason is and behave

accordingly during the delivery of their sermons. Always move

deliberately on the stage or platform.

Axiom #4: Identify as much as you can with your audience in dress and

politic.

We have already spoken of the importance of audience identity. But the

issue of "like" is powerful. People want the preacher to believe what

they believe in just about everything. They like their heroes

cultural or subcultural to behave, dress and think as they do.

I remember when George W. Bush went to the World Series to throw in

the first pitch of the World Series, shortly after 9/11. I was so

impressed with the fact that he wore a brown bomber jacket and a pair

of brown slacks, I caught myself wearing a similar jacket and pair of

slacks the next day. I never realized I was doing it until my wife

remarked that I looked "presidential" that day. I suddenly realized

that most people are anxious to imitate or at least to celebrate

people they admire. I had never really isolated the feeling before.

But Bush had earned my copycat esteem. I could see that in his world

where any one of a hundred thousand people might have taken a potshot

at him, it really was an openly courageous thing he did especially at

that intense time of national paranoia.

To a much lesser degree, most people either like their pastor or they

have a strong yen to admire him or her. One shouldn't make a god of

this adoration lest we leave off speaking the word of God in favor of

what would make us popular. But to care about this as much as we might

brings a camaraderie into communication, which would not be there were

we to act in ways that might intentionally "jangle" them.

This is so important to me that I call every church where I am to

preach on any given Sunday. I call to see what the detente is in terms

of style, worship, and politics. In evangelical churches, Democrats

are increasingly in short supply. If the preacher is honestly a

Democrat, he or she does not have to become a pseudo‑Republican just

to "butter up the audience," but it would be wise not to antagonize

them for unimportant reasons. In a nation as deeply divided as ours

is, it is just smart to avoid saying anything deeply partisan, with

passion. As the cliche runs, pick carefully the "hill you want to die

on."

Axiom #5: Light the pulpit: people won't hear what they can't see.

Obviously, this concern about good lighting is not a "hill to die on"

for itinerants like me. I simply accept having to preach in dark old,

poorly‑ illumined sanctuaries, many of which were built before

electrification had become sophisticated. But for local pastors, it

may be that they will want to explore what might be done to get light

on the pulpit.

I have twice preached in a dimly lit church where the people were

looking back at me with that "squinty eyed" stare that one sees in

theaters as the lights are being dimmed. The worst thing about such

poorly lit sermons is that people need to be able see the passion, the

body language, and the drama of what they attend. Great words spoken

in darkness quickly become invisible as well as inaudible.

Axiom #6: Never let the audio system work against your delivery.

I was on a program with Robert Schuller once. He never knew it. He

was, after all, one of the most prominent preachers in America. I was,

after all, not prominent anywhere. One of the greatest differences

between our sermons other than the size of the honoraria we each

received was the microphones we were given. He was, of course, given

a great state‑of‑the‑art lapel microphone, while I was given one that

looked like a 1945 Army surplus walkie‑talkie. His was a "positive

thinkers, be‑happy‑attitude" FM tuner. Mine was a whistling

feed‑backer that shrieked into splitting eardrums, virtually defying

the Holy Spirit to get involved in what I was saying.

But I did learn something that baleful night. If you must follow a

national celebrity, ask the sound technicians to give you the big

man's mike as soon as he is through with it. This has been my policy

ever since. Most technicians will know you are not the big deal and

will struggle with your insistence on the matter. What works here

other than a full nelson and a body slam is being tough. If you are

not, you will find yourself wearing the '45 walkie‑talkie and thereby

serve to make the pundit look wiser than you are by feed‑backing your

squawky rhetoric into the ears of people who will agree with the sound

crew that you are clearly not of any great importance or you would

have gotten better equipment.

Tell the sound crew to keep your sound level midrange and not to play

with the knobs while you are preaching. It is better to be bit loud or

a tad soft than to be up and down throughout the sermon. Some of them

will smile piteously at any suggestion that you make since all sound

crews are Calvinist, even in Arminian churches, and feel they are

predestined to do what they want. But try anyway because there have

been a few isolated cases of sound crews actually behaving in a

Christian manner. When they do, it is a wonderful gift to those who

listen and those who preach.

The only other observation is to watch out for floor cords. They can

trip you up literally. If you have the good fortune to preach after

the Olivet Octet, there will usually be a full eight mikes and cords

for you to negotiate as you try to remember what you want to say,

keeping your eye contact with the audience while you study the

zigzagging wires that coil like anorexic anacondas about your feet.

One false move and you could stumble into a seven‑ton amplifier and

electrocute yourself.

Axiom #7: Work to eliminate all affections of manner and voice in

delivery.

Of all the axioms this one is the very hardest to eliminate for it

requires dividing your brain into two parts, one of which is

delivering your sermon and the other of which is monitoring the

delivery. Almost every preacher (at the beginning of ministry) has

some affectation in delivery that prevents the sermon from arriving in

a crisp, intelligent, and forceful manner. The affectation may be as

simple as a vocalized pause or a nervous pacing during the delivery

that keeps the sermon from being understood, or at least bars the

preacher from ease of comprehension.

I've seen student preachers (in years of homiletics classes) run their

hands distractedly into their pockets twenty times during a ten‑minute

sermon. There is a Presbyterian pastor‑author whose writing I admire

much more than his preaching. His preaching comes punctuated by a

nervous clearing of his throat. He is a kind of tubercular

Demosthenes. His written oration is potentially as pretty as his

manuscripts are riveting. Alas, his affectation is so bad that most of

us at first want to lend him an inhaler and at last want to hear

someone else speak. There is no physical reason for his affectation,

and yet one of this intensity is very hard to clear up.

As a young man I was affected by what Edwin Newman (in Strictly

Speaking) calls the "y'know" sydrome. During a twenty‑minute sermon I

would say "you know" at least fifty times. I finally managed to subdue

the bad habit, but it required the utmost in discipline until I

achieved it.

All affectation requires the dividing of the brain into two specific

lobes, one of which runs the sermon through the larynx and the other

which sits like a school master pointing out when the affectation is

inserting itself into your speech. Naturally, it is maddening work,

but it must be performed over and over again until the horrible little

interrupting demons have all been exorcised.

In my case it required a year of effort to get the "you know" grit out

of my speech. I have worked with students on the "uhs" and "ers" of

vocalized pauses. I usually count them during a presentation so they

will know how pervasive these little interrupters are. I can't keep

them from continuing down the trail of affected sermonizing, but I can

point out to them that it is their responsibility to take care of

their problem or else spend all their preaching careers locked up in

poor communication.

Correcting the problem is complicated by passion. If we really want to

say what possesses our souls, it is difficult to care about what may

at first appear to be trivial. This kind of problem is like a

stutterer making a 9‑1‑1 call. The passionate need of the moment seems

more important than being understood. But it is not. To cry, "Eric

J‑J‑J‑Jones, h‑h‑here! I live at f‑f‑f‑ fifty three f‑f‑f‑forty,

th‑th‑th‑Thunderbird Drive and my h‑h‑h‑house is on f‑ f‑f‑fire!"

leaves the question of passion versus affectation a begging issue.

In preaching, clear speech and an unaffected delivery is essential to

strong persuasion of riveting interest.

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Why Serious Preachers Use Humor - Discernment for Light Moments with a Weighty Purpose. By John Henry Beukema

- 9/2011.101

Why Serious Preachers Use Humor (Part 1)

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

This is part one in a four‑part series.

I once introduced a sermon story by saying, "I don't like this story."

Here is approximately what followed:

Fred Craddock tells of a young pastor visiting an elderly woman in the

hospital. The pastor finds the woman to be quite ill, gasping for

breath, and obviously nearing the end of her life. In the midst of

tubes, bags, and beeping medical machines, the pastor reads Scripture

and offers spiritual comfort.

He asks, "Would you like to have prayer before I go?" and the lady

whispers a yes.

The pastor says, "What would you like me to pray for today?"

The patient responds, "That I would be healed."

The pastor gulps. He thinks, The poor lady can't accept the

inevitable. This is like asking God to vaporize the calories from a

dozen Krispy Kremes. She isn't facing reality.The young minister keeps

this to himself and begins to intercede, sort of.

"Lord, we pray for your sustaining presence with this sick sister, and

if it be your will, we pray she will be restored to health and

service. But if it's not your will, we certainly hope she will adjust

to her circumstances."

Have you prayed prayers like that? They're safe prayers. They give God

a way out, an excuse, just in case the request is not in his will, and

he doesn't come through.

Immediately after the pastor puts an amen on this safe prayer, the

woman opens her eyes and sits up in bed. Then she throws her feet over

the side and stands up.

"I think I'm healed!" she cries.

Before the pastor can react, the woman walks over to the door, pulls

it open, and strides down the hospital corridor. The last thing the

pastor hears before she disappears are the words "Look at me, look at

me. I'm healed."

The pastor pushes his mouth closed, gets up, and slowly walks down the

stairs and out to the parking lot. There is no sign of the former

patient. He opens his car door and stops. Looking up to the heavens,

the pastor says, "Please don't ever do that to me again."

I don't like that story. I don't like itbecause I can identify with

him.

This anecdote is not hilarious. However the story is humorously

effective. It has the key characteristics of what makes something

funny.

Three characteristics of humor

Christian author, speaker, and comedian Ken Davis, president of

Dynamic Communications, identifies three elements that make something

funny: truth, exaggeration, and surprise.

Truth The story above contains an element of reality that hearers

recognize as true. It is an admission of human frailty. People

identify with, in this case, praying for things they don't really

expect God to supply.

Exaggeration The whole story is exaggerated, from the overabundance of

life‑support technology, to the ambiguity of the pastor's prayer, to

the immediacy of the woman's recovery. In real life the woman would

still be downstairs paying her bill.

Surprise This is the strong point of the story. As it unfolds, you

can't help but wonder what's going to happen. The pastor's reaction is

completely unexpected. The final twist is my explanation of why I

don't like the story.

Nothing is funny that doesn't have at least one of these

characteristics. How painful it is to be under the impression that we

are saying something comical when it is not. If your stories fall

flat, begin by evaluating them in light of these three categories.

Of course, these are not the only considerations in using humor well,

but before exploring further, it is necessary to ask if humor has any

place at all in the pulpit.

Is there a place for humor in preaching?

Haddon Robinson, preaching professor at Gordon‑Conwell Theological

Seminary, says, "Since preaching deals with life, it has to have some

element of humor. We have to look at life as it's lived and see at

times how absurd it is."

Consider some of the metaphors and statements of Jesus, and it soon

becomes obvious that Jesus was not above introducing a comic element

to make a point. Ken Davis gives the example of Jesus' words recorded

by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that "It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom

of God." Davis pokes fun at attempts to explain the "eye of a needle"

as a city gate, where a camel would have to take off all encumbrances

and kneel down to enter; or the explanation that the word for camel

actually meant "big rope." Such interpretations militate against the

point Jesus makes. Jesus presented a picture so outrageous it was

funny, and yet the subject of salvation could not have been more

serious.

Jesus employed exaggeration. Elton Trueblood was inspired to write the

book The Humour of Christ, when he read Jesus' words about specks and

logs in people's eyes, and the description made his four‑year‑old

laugh. Jesus told stories that provoked surprise. When a Samaritan

stopped to help the half‑dead man, after two religious types passed

the victim by, it was a shocker. A little research into

Samaritan‑Jewish relations at the time shows how laughably implausible

this must have seemed to the hearers. Jesus spoke truth couched in a

smile. Jesus' description of those who "strain out a gnat but swallow

a camel," ( - Matthew 23:24 - Matthew 23:24}) is as amusing as

it is pointed.

John Stott writes, "It seems to be generally agreed that humour was

one of the weapons in the armoury of the Master Teacher." (Between Two

Worlds, 287) If that is accepted, then the question of whether we

should use humor is settled. Perhaps a better question to ask is, What

types of humor do not belong in preaching?

Unfit Humor

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was renowned both for the power of his sermons

and for his wit. Once Spurgeon answered a knock at the door of his

home and was confronted by a man holding a big stick.

The man sprang into the hall and announced that he had come to kill

Spurgeon.

"You must mean my brother," the preacher said, trying to calm the

fellow. "His name is Spurgeon."

But the man would not be dissuaded. "It is the man that makes the

jokes I mean to kill." (Warren Wiersbe, Walking with the Giants, p.

195)

Spurgeon the preacher was no joke teller, but he "had a gift of humor,

and at times it came into play as he preached." (Arnold Dalimore, C.

H. Spurgeon, p. 76) The criticism Spurgeon received prompted him to

defend the use of humor in preaching and to clarify which aspects did

not belong in the pulpit.

Levity is unsuitable Spurgeon emphasizes that humor and levity are not

synonymous. "Cheerfulness is one thing, and frivolity is another; he

is a wise man who by a serious happiness of conversation steers

between the dark rocks of moroseness, and the quicksands of levity."

(Lectures to My Students, p. 151) "We must conquer our tendency to

levity. A great distinction exists between holy cheerfulness, which is

a virtue, and general levity, which is a vice. There is a levity which

has not enough heart to laugh, but trifles with everything; it is

flippant, hollow, unreal. A hearty laugh is no more levity than a

hearty cry." (Lectures to My Students, p. 212)

Spurgeon's differentiations are helpful. Levity is lighthearted to the

point of being inappropriate. Flippancy communicates casual

indifference or disrespect. Frivolous comments are not suitable in

sermons and detract from the grand purpose of preaching. Haddon

Robinson feels that "humor is more often misused in preaching than it

is well‑usedbecause the joke is told for its own sake."

John Piper, author and pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in

Minneapolis, says, "Earnestness is the demeanor that corresponds to

the weight of the subject matter of preaching. The opposite of earnest

is not joyful, but trivial, flippant, frivolous, chipper. It is

possible to be earnest and have elements of humor, though not levity."

("Thoughts on Earnestness in Preaching," an unpublished lecture at The

Bethlehem Institute, Minneapolis, 1999)

Of course the line is not always easily drawn, and one person's witty

insight might be considered glib or juvenile by another. But levity is

the enemy of what Spurgeon and Piper refer to as earnestness.

Earnestness gives preaching energy, fervency, sincerity, and

excellence. Levity tarnishes these qualities, while humor polishes

them.

Excessive humor is counterproductive In an often repeated but

unverified story, Spurgeon responds to a woman expressing her

displeasure over his frequent use of humor by saying, "If you knew how

much I held back, you would give me credit." While self‑discipline is

necessary in all aspects of the sermon, it is most required with

humor. John Piper warns, "There is a place for humor in our lives, but

there is something deeply wrong that we feel compelled to use so much

of it in teaching and preaching and even worshiping." (from the sermon

"Revival and Fasting," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on June 6,

1986)

John Ortberg, author and teaching pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian

Church in Menlo Park, California, went through a period when he felt

humor had become too important to him. Telling a funny story became a

predictable part of every message. He used it to relax when speaking

and to determine that people were with him. Even though the humor was

appropriate and purposeful, Ortberg sensed he was becoming dependent

upon it. To combat that, he disciplined himself to preach several

times in a row using little humor.

Haddon Robinson suggests if we realize we are using humor that doesn't

serve the truth, we need to forgo it for a time. "If I'm addicted to

it, that means I'm going to tell it for its own sake, or my sake, or

the audience's sake, but not for the sake of the truth." "Humour is

legitimate," says John Stott. "Nevertheless, we have to be sparing in

our use of it and judicious in the topics we select for laughter."

(Between Two Worlds, p. 288)

Inappropriate humor has no place Certain subjects must never be

approached in a joking manner. Stories that make fun of a person's

weight, ethnicity, age, political views, or physical limitations are

off limits. Sexual innuendos, foolishness, what - Ephesians

5:4 - Ephesians 5:4} calls "coarse jesting," are unacceptable.

Sacred things cannot be mentioned in any humorous context without

great care. The rite of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's

Table should almost always be avoided as topics of humor. Haddon

Robinson notes "the most humorous things happen when we are trying to

be the most serious." Before mentioning any of those things from the

pulpit, you must be sure you aren't "making light of something God

takes seriously."

I heard a preacher tell about visiting a woman in her mobile home in

an attempt to share the good news. In a single story, he managed to

demean baptism, poverty, evangelism, and obesity.

It is unlikely that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should ever be

invoked in a comedic context. We should not use humor that confirms

stereotypes about God, treats him casually, or otherwise portrays him

inaccurately.

Some humor that references God can be acceptable. For example, Ken

Davis tells about a burglar who breaks into a home only to hear a

voice in the darkness saying, "I see you, and Jesus sees you too."

After discovering the voice belongs to a parrot, the robber goes to

silence the bird, then spots a huge, snarling Doberman next to the

cage. At that point the parrot says, "Sic him, Jesus." Davis walks a

fine line here, but uses the story effectively by pointing out that

this is how many people view God, as ferocious and ready to attack at

the first wrong step.

Beware of putting the "ick" in comical. Author and speaker Fred Smith

uses as a guideline the old saying "While the audience laughed, the

angels cried." Smith says one test of appropriate humor is "Do the

angels laugh too?"

Guided by these cautions, the preacher can be confident that humor can

have an important place in the sermon. Phillips Brooks in his Lectures

on Preaching called humor "one of the most helpful qualities that the

preacher can possess"; and John Stott said, "We should press it

[humor] gladly into service in the cause of the gospel." (Between Two

Worlds, 292) What the preacher must strive for is humor that is

appropriate in topic, timing, and purpose.

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Why Serious Preachers Use Humor (Part 2)

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part two in a four‑part series.

Phillips Brooks in his Lectures on Preaching called humor "one of the

most helpful qualities that the preacher can possess"; and John Stott

said, "We should press it [humor] gladly into service in the cause of

the gospel." (Between Two Worlds, 292) Let's look at nine benefits

that lead serious preachers like these to use humor.

Humor overcomes defenses

John Ortberg says he uses humor for the same reason a surgeon uses

anesthesia: not to put people to sleep, but to prepare and enable them

to receive painful truth they need. Hearers try to defend themselves

against hard truth, and humor can smuggle that truth past their

resistance and automatic defenses. "No other means can so quickly

break the ice, relax inhibitions, and create an attitude of

expectancy." (James Cox, Preaching, 186)

Ortberg says a fast turn from humor to seriousness "catches people off

guard, and all of a sudden you're in much deeper than what they were

expecting." He gives this example:

Many years ago, early on in our marriage, my wife and I sold our

Volkswagen Beetle to buy our first really nice piece of furniture. It

was a sofa. It was a pink sofa, but for that kind of money, it was

called a mauve sofa. The man at the sofa store told us all about how

to take care of it, and we took it home.

We had very small children in those days, and does anybody want to

guess what was the Number One Rule in our house from that day on?

"Don't sit on the mauve sofa! Don't play near the mauve sofa! Don't

eat around the mauve sofa! Don't touch the mauve sofa! Don't breathe

on the mauve sofa! Don't think about the mauve sofa! On every other

chair in the house, you may freely sit, but on this sofathe mauve

sofayou may not sit, for on the day you sit thereon, you will surely

die!"

And then one day came the "Fall." There appeared on the mauve sofa a

stain...a red stain...a red jelly stain. My wife called the man at the

sofa factory, and he told her how bad that was. So she assembled our

three children to look at the stain on the sofa. Laura, who then was

about 4, and Mallory, who was about 2Â, and Johnny, who was maybe 6

months. She said, "Children, do you see that? That's a stain. That's a

red stain. That's a red jelly stain. And the man at the sofa store

says it's not coming out, not for all eternity. Do you know how long

eternity is, children? Eternity is how long we're all going to sit

here until one of you tells me which one of you put the red jelly

stain on the mauve sofa."

For a long time they all just sat there until finally Mallory cracked.

I knew she would. She said, "Laura did it." Laura said, "No I didn't."

Then it was dead silence for the longest time. And I knew that none of

them would confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they had

never seen their mom that mad in their lives. I knew none of them was

going to confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they knew if

they did, they would spend all of eternity in the "Time Out Chair." I

knew that none of them would confess putting the stain on the sofa,

because in fact, I was the one who put the stain on the sofa, and I

wasn't sayin' nuthin'! Not a word!

Ortberg turns from that to say, "Here's the truth about us. We've all

stained the sofa." The humor opened people's hearts, enabling Ortberg

to talk about the serious subjects of sin, guilt, and a holy God.

Fred Smith calls this aspect of humor "lubricating the needle."

Humor relieves tension

John Ortberg talks about the art of tension management. Communicators

gifted at motivation or conviction are able to discern how much

tension the audience can tolerate. Too much tension, and hearers start

to pull away emotionally. So humor can be a pressure release that

keeps people engaged. But we must fight the urge to use humor to

relieve the tension prematurely. Ortberg says, "We often underestimate

how much tension people are able to tolerate, and we underestimate the

use of tension in producing change."

Humor heightens interest

Gaining the attention of a congregation and then holding their

interest is probably the most common reason speakers use humor. John

Ortberg feels that the engagement of the audience can be discerned by

the sounds in the roomfoot shuffling, coughing, and rustling. When

the noise level gets too high, spontaneous humor can often regain the

attention of those whose minds have wandered. Ortberg also

intentionally injects humor when a section of a sermon has a high

information quotient.

Humor shows our humanity

Ken Davis likes the definition of humor as "a gentle way to

acknowledge human frailty." Preachers must communicate as real people

and not "wholly other" creatures. Humor conveys that perhaps better

than anything else. Phillips Brooks declared, "There is no

extravagance which deforms the pulpit which would not be modified and

repressed, often entirely obliterated, if the minister had a true

sense of humor." (Lectures on Preaching, p. 57)

If preaching is "a man uttering truth through his own personality," as

Brooks described it, then for many the absence of humor would be a

denial of who they are. It would be as unnatural to remove all humor

from their speech as it would be to eliminate voice inflection. Says

author Warren Wiersbe, "The whole man must be in the pulpit, and if

this includes a sense of humor, then so be it." (Walking with the

Giants, p. 197, emphasis original)

Humor expresses the joy of the Lord

John Ortberg sees joy as a large component of Scripture, the church,

and the experience of being present for the preaching of God's Word.

One way we express that joy is in laughter. The willingness of a

preacher and congregation to laugh together is a healthy sign of

spiritual vitality. Thomas Long implies that laughter indicates good

theology. "Because God in Christ has broken the power of sin and

death, Christian congregations and their preachers are free to laugh

at themselves." (The Witness of Preaching, p. 16)

Humor establishes a connection between the speaker and the audience

A friend of John Ortberg's visits different churches in his capacity

as a church consultant. After listening to many different sermons, the

consultant observed that a sense of connection between a preacher and

the congregation most often came at the first moment of laughter in a

message. Ortberg himself feels humor is a part of who he is, so using

it makes him comfortable and helps establish a relationship with

listeners.

Humor encourages a sense of community

John Ortberg believes that outward expressions of joy and humor have

"the capacity to create a sense of community." Beyond the relationship

that humor establishes between speaker and listener, it also sparks

something among the people themselves. There is a shared experience

that engenders warm feelings. Humor is one way to help break people

out of the isolation that comes from sitting in a congregation of

strangers, enabling them to feel part of something bigger than

themselves.

Humor draws attention to the truth

Spurgeon advised his preaching students to "be so thoroughly solemn

that all your faculties are aroused and consecrated, and then a dash

of humour will only add intenser gravity to the discourse, even as a

flash of lightning makes midnight darkness all the more impressive."

(Lectures to My Students, p. 189) It is in the flash of humor that

truth can sometimes be most clearly seen.

That was my purpose in using this Paul Harvey story.

The Butterball company set up a Thanksgiving hotline to answer

questions about cooking turkeys. One woman asked if she could use a

turkey that had been in the bottom of her freezer for23 years. You

heard me, 23 years. The Butterball experthow's that for a job

titletold her it would probably be safe if the freezer had been below

zero the entire time. The expert then warned her that even if the

turkey was safe to eat, the flavor would likely have deteriorated and

wouldn't be worth eating. The woman said, "That's what I thought.

We'll give the turkey to our church."

After the laughter subsided, I said, "Sin first shows itself in what

you give God."

Ken Davis says, "Laughter helps people see the darkness of their

hearts."

Humor is one language of our culture

Our society craves humor. People love to laugh, and they spend

incalculable amounts of money seeking to be entertained. As

missionaries to this culture, humor aids in presenting the message in

a way people understand. A church or sermon devoid of laughter may not

be seen as real.

John Ortberg feels that laughter communicates to those outside the

church that this is a place where "they speak my language," a place

that has a connection point with today's world.

Humor in Preaching 2

Why Serious Preachers Use Humor (Part 3)

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part three in a four‑part series.

Phillips Brooks in his Lectures on Preaching called humor "one of the

most helpful qualities that the preacher can possess"; and John Stott

said, "We should press [humor] gladly into service in the cause of the

gospel." Let's look at six characteristics of effective humor.

Have a purpose

John Ortberg believes that since "the ultimate goal of preaching is to

have Christ formed in people," humor must always be the servant of the

message. If humor does nothing to forward that purpose, then the

preacher must be willing to jettison it from the sermon. Haddon

Robinson says the "cardinal rule of humor is it must serve the truth."

One indication of this is when your audience thinks of the story they

think of the truth that lies behind it.

Of the many benefits of humor listed above, some advantages may not be

sufficient justification for its inclusion. Humor must serve the

greater purpose. We should ask questions such as, In what way does

this contribute to the point being made? How will this enable people

to hear the truth? Why does this story deserve time in this message?

Ken Davis says, "The purpose should be that this humor illustrates a

point, clarifies a point, draws people's attention to a point that is

going to take them one step closer to the cross."

Effective humor will be entertaining, and there is nothing wrong with

that. Entertainment is wrong when it becomes the objective or becomes

an end in itself. We can cross the line into that simply by our

timing. John Ortberg suggests that when we rush to relieve tension

through humor, it indicates a self‑esteem issue. Our inability to wait

for tension to have its greatest spiritual effect may be because we

are too anxious for people to like us. When the preacher is concerned

with keeping people happy, truth‑telling has been compromised.

Be neither offensive nor innocuous

Preaching will always offend someone. The solution is not bland

speech. Instead, we must strictly monitor those things we intend to be

funny. Ask yourself who might consider this offensive and know that

your own sensitivities are not always trustworthy.

One high profile speaker told a news story that involved the attempted

electrocution of a pig. The speaker told this with glee, even the part

where two farmers ended up dead, one was critically injured, and the

pig was unharmed. I've learned the hard way that any story involving

the endangerment of an animal should only be used with extreme

caution. The problem with this story was not that it didn't serve the

messagebelieve it or not, it did. But the real loss of human life

should not be a source of casual mirth. The contribution the story

made to the point was overshadowed by its insensitivity.

Humor used in the pulpit should not make someone cringe. Hurtful humor

can be damaging even if it does not offend the "victim." Ken Davis

warns that the preacher may good‑naturedly rib a friend, but others

don't know this comes out of friendship and take offense for that

other person.

Be selective

John Ortberg says the laws of humor are the same as the laws of real

estatelocation, location, location. The right story must come at the

right time in the message. Fred Smith believes in using it like good

spice, "permeating the whole," but there are moments when humor should

be avoided. Ortberg speaks of times when there was a tender spirit in

the room, and he realized something humorous he intended to say might

disrupt that spirit. Discipline is needed "because there's something

else going on that's more important than humor."

Fred Smith writes, "Humor should be used to sharpen the truth, not

dull it." This is a determining factor in the placement of humor. It

must not only be in the right place in the message but in the right

message. In the rush to use something good, we must resist the urge to

wedge it in where it does not belong. Ortberg says, "When it really

fits, it's going to accomplish much more good. I have to discipline

myself, wait, and save it for that time."

Be self‑deprecating without becoming self‑centered

Humor can be an expression of humility if the speaker is secure enough

to poke fun at himself. Haddon Robinson writes, "We like people who

laugh at themselves, because they are saying, 'What I'm talking about

is very serious, but I don't take myself too seriously.'" (Mastering

Contemporary Preaching, p. 134) When the speaker is the butt of the

joke, this lowers the defenses of listeners even further to the

scalpel of truth.

In a sermon from , I challenged the congregation to pray impossible

prayers. I said I myself was trying to grow in that area. I told of

four impossible prayers I had once prayed for daily. Eventually I

concluded the answer to the first two prayers was "No," the answer to

number three was "Not yet," and prayer number four I gave up on

entirely. I said:

I quit my impossible prayer. What a great prayer warrior I am. But in

these last few weeks my wife has had four amazing answers to prayer,

at least two of which were impossible. One was the exact request I'd

given up on. She can pray, she can preachI think you've got the wrong

one of us as pastor.

People appreciated that little insight more than I could have

imagined. My wife thought highly of the story also.

The caution is we should watch that we don't talk about ourselves too

much. Ken Davis says to take care "that the word self doesn't become a

huge part of our messages."

Practice but be open to spontaneity

John Ortberg warns, "Worse than having no humor at all is forcing

humor that isn't funny."

To avoid that, Ken Davis says humor is a tool we must practice with to

learn to operate well. He believes with a little work, just about

anything can be funny. Preachers need to look at something that made

them chuckle and figure out why it struck them as funny. When that

lesson is understood, we can learn to present stories in a way that

will produce the same response from our audience.

Practice ways not to introduce stories with "A funny thing happened to

me the other day." Practice the flow of stories on one or two people

until the timing and wording is honed. Humor comes less from what you

say than from how you say it.

Practice should not preclude spontaneous humor, which can sometimes be

the most effective.

A family in our church was moving. The husband told me he was only

known in the church as "Kim's husband" because she was so involved and

he traveled so much. She would be greatly missed, but he doubted we

would know he was gone. With his permission I told that story during a

sermon from about significance. I repeated our conversation and began

to emphasize his great worth to his family and church. It started to

get emotional. Suddenly a thought hit me and I said, "Now if somebody

could point this guy out to me" The room went nuts.

Take care, though; these unplanned additions are also the most

dangerous because you have only moments to filter and evaluate what

you are going to say.

Observe daily life

Humor flowing from life experiences always trumps jokes with punch

lines. Jokes are what Ken Davis calls high‑risk humor. If a joke dies,

everyone knows it, and the point may die with it. When a personal

story doesn't elicit the laugh you thought it would, it still

maintains the power to illustrate the point. That's why Davis calls

this low risk humor and suggests this is where someone trying to learn

to be more humorous should begin. So avoid joke books and pay more

attention to what is going on around you.

John Ortberg says, "The best kind of humor is observational humor,

humor that flows out of the incongruities of life and the way life

works." Haddon Robinson talks about the power of humor that is "an

observation about life that causes me to laugh and at the same time

gives me insight."

There is no lack of material. "Life's experiences bring more humor

than you could ever use in a million years," says Ken Davis. Preachers

need to be aware of how everyday things can be funnyeven those things

that were not funny at the time. Davis tells a story about a minor car

accident that set off the air bag. He says TV doesn't tell you the

truth when they picture the air bag coming out like a salvation

marshmallow. In his experience the impact painfully bloodied his nose.

Davis turns the painful incident into a riotously funny story.

\webpage{http://pttranscripts.stores.yahoo.net/whyseprusehu2.html

Part 4

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part four in a four‑part series.

This week we look at seven more characteristics of effective humor.

Focus on a common truth

Talk about experiences others identify with. Ken Davis ties into a

common feeling among men with this observation:

There's proof in the Mall of America that men weren't supposed to

shop. The proof is the 180 miles of benches, and there are no women on

those benches, only men. I saw an 80‑or 90‑year‑old guy with cobwebs

hanging from his head. The sad part was that he wasn't 90 when he went

into the mall.

Humor based on truth, then in this case exaggerated, gets people

nodding and laughing in agreement. It may be something overlooked by

the average person until you focus on it.

Be yourself

While Ortberg and Davis agree that we must work at humor, especially

those of us who are not naturally funny, nevertheless we shouldn't try

to become someone we are not. Humor must fit our personality and

style. Haddon Robinson says, "If you don't do it within conversation,

you are wise to avoid it in public."

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style. Haddon Robinson says, "If you don't do it within conversation,

you are wise to avoid it in public."

Ken Davis says, "It's important to know your own style and ability. My

tendency is to be way out there." But Davis admires comedian Steven

Wright, who speaks slowly and unemotionally. He simply puts together

truths that are rarely observed. For example, Wright points out that

if you drop a buttered piece of toast, it will always fall butter side

down. And if you drop a cat, he will always land on his feet. "So the

other day I tied a piece of buttered toast to my cat's back."

If Steven Wright tried to act like Robin Williams, it wouldn't work.

But he delivers lines in a way that fits his personality, and it's

hilarious. Davis says, "Humor isn't necessarily that 'lay on the floor

and laugh till you're sick' kind of thing. Sometimes it's just a

comment that makes people smile and think, Man, that is so true.

That's humor."

Be gracious

Poking fun at someone other than yourself is a minefield. Sometimes

speakers feel that an infamous celebrity is fair game. That

celebrity's lifestyle is so out of line with biblical morality that

the speaker thinks little of holding that person up for ridicule.

Haddon Robinson uses this guideline, "If that person was sitting in

the front row when I made the remark, would they feel it was a cheap

shot?"

Humor that is suitable for preaching tears down no one, no matter how

justifiable it feels. If a celebrity or anyone the hearer appreciates

is mocked, the point being made is lost. "Let your conversation be

always full of grace, seasoned with salt," ( - Colossians

4:6 - Colossians 4:6}).

Be honest about exaggeration

Exaggeration is legitimate in humor, and using hyperbole does not

cause hearers to stop taking us seriously if we signal to hearers that

we are using humor. Ken Davis says, "It's important to maintain

integrity." He says at some point there needs to be something like a

wink to the audience. Davis says that with his gestures and tone he

becomes bigger than life. This clues in the audience that he's telling

the story bigger than it actually happened. He suggests there may be a

need to say, "You know it didn't happen quite that way," or to roll

your eyes.

Preachers get themselves into trouble when they insist that a story is

true when it exceeds the bounds of reality. To qualify with the words,

"I don't know if this story is true," doesn't take away anything from

it and gives the audience permission to have fun rather trying to

determine the veracity of the speaker.

Keep the surprise

Introducing something funny by calling it funny is disastrous. It's

harder to surprise people. For some people an automatic resistance

kicks in. They cross their arms and think, I'll be the judge of that.

The story had better be funny, or the speaker is climbing out of a

deep hole for the rest of the talk.

Credit sources

Nothing dampens the effectiveness of humor more surely or our

credibility more quickly than presenting someone else's humor as our

own or someone else's experience as our own.

Giving proper credit does not take away from the enjoyment of the

story. I once told a Ken Davis story in a sermon. I acknowledged him

at the beginning, and everyone still laughed hard. Afterward a number

of people mentioned to me they had heard the story before. Had I

failed to give credit, I would have paid for it.

Transition carefully between what is serious and what is light

John Ortberg believes it is much easier to transition from light, fun

material to serious issues like guilt and sin than it is to move in

the other direction.

Ken Davis gives this example of a sudden shift from light to serious:

I read the response of children to what they thought love was. One

little child thought love was when "a boy puts on cologne and a girl

puts on perfume, and then they go on a date and smell each other." One

little girl said, "I think love is when my grandma can't move anymore;

she's in a wheelchair, and my grandpa clips her toenails even when he

has arthritis, and he can't move his hands."

When going from seriousness to humor, in general we should do so

gradually, in a step‑by‑step process. Otherwise, Ortberg says, "I'm

going to trivialize everything I've been saying." A sacred moment will

be intruded upon and lost.

An unexpected benefit of a humorous story

In a sermon on the supremacy of Christ, I used my personal feelings

humorously to make a serious point. I said weddings are my least

favorite pastoral duty. There was nervous laughter. I said I felt that

way because so much could go wrong. I feared two outcomes: the mother

of the bride would hate me, or I would end up on America's Funniest

Home Videos.

I went on. As a pastor in training I'd been warned about

photographers. They were the enemy, seeking to disrupt every ceremony.

It didn't take long for me to see this was no idle threat.

Photographers ran up and down center aisles, blinded us with flashes,

and whispered stage directions during the vows. The worst was the guy

who got on his hands and knees and crawled behind the choir rail. I

heard him scurrying along behind me, and then every few feet he would

pop his head over the rail and snap a few pictures.

I acted all this out. It was a riot. I concluded with these words.

The way I see it, weddings are the legal, spiritual, public joining

together of two lives. They are not primarily a photo opportunity.

Someday I'm going to grab one of those photographers by the throat and

scream, "It's not about you." You came here today with something on

your mind. Maybe you were consumed with your plans, struggling with

loneliness, anxious about your marriage, or worried about money. These

concerns are all secondary. The gospel shouts, "It's all about Jesus."

This proved to be a powerful story. "It's all about Jesus" is a

popular theme in our church. And I'm asked to do fewer weddings.

\webpage{http://pttranscripts.stores.yahoo.net/whyseprusehu3.html

Laughing on Purpose (Part 1)

When humor helps a message.

An interview with John Ortberg

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Note: In his article, "Why Serious Preachers Use Humor," John Beukema

quoted frequently from an interview he conducted with John Ortberg.

This article presents the interview in full.

PreachingToday.com: When you use humor in preaching, what purposes do

you have in mind?

John Ortberg: I use humor for the same reason a surgeon uses

anesthesia. People tend to defend themselves against truth and

particularly hard truth. Humor has the capacity to lower people's

defenses, like few other forces do. It enables me to get the scalpel a

lot deeper than I might be able to otherwise. There's something about

the process of laughing about the human condition that gets to the

heart. It penetrates past the automatic defenses and resistance that

people have.

For instance, when I talk about the cross, and Jesus' death for our

sins, that gets into the whole business that our sin is serious. So

first, I talk about the human condition in a way that's fun, and

people are laughing, and then I can move much more quickly to what

this says about us." The reality is that every one of us has this

condition, and it's real serious and it's real dark." There's a fast

turn from light to dark, from humor to seriousness that catches people

off guard, and all of a sudden you're in much deeper than they were

expecting.

Would you say that you aim for humor more often when the subject is

most serious?

Not necessarily when it's most serious, but if it's a subject where I

anticipate there may be a lot of resistance, then I'll often aim for

it. I also look for it if I'm doing a message that's heavily didactic,

where for the sake of the congregation's growth we need to get through

a lot of material. When there's a high information quotient to it,

there can be the danger of people dropping off. So I'll look to inject

humor to keep people engaged.

What other purposes do you have in mind?

Partly to have fun. Joy is a big component of Scripture. The

experience of church and of being present for the preaching of God's

Word ought to be a joyful experience. Not in every moment, but that

ought to be a part of it.

Joy also has the capacity to create a sense of community. When you're

in a room with a bunch of other people and you share moments of joy,

there's a connection that often happens.

I'd also say that humor is a part of the language of our culture.

Especially for unchurched folks it can help them feel like This is a

place where I can see myself involved and connected. They speak my

language here.

How can the preacher use humor effectively without losing the

seriousness of the Word of God?

The need for discernment is huge. That comes through experience, but

also by soliciting honest feedback from people whose wisdom you trust.

Humor, if it's going to be used, has to be the servant of the message.

That means any time it's not going to serve the purpose of forming

Christ in the people listening, then I have to get rid of it. One

thing I'll do is try to be sensitive to the moment. There may be times

when there's a tender spirit in the room, and there is a story or a

line that I know could get a laugh, but it might disrupt what's going

on in that moment. I need to say, No, I'm not going to use it. I'm

going to pull back in this moment because there's something else going

on that's more important than the humor.

Have there been times you fought that feeling and went ahead anyway?

Absolutely. I lean on the humor side. Everybody has their own style,

and there are some people who are tremendously effective communicators

who use very little humor. And then there are people like Ken Davis

who can't get up and recite his phone number without being funny. I

lean more towards the humor side. I have learned from painful

experience that sometimes I will try to be funny, and it will end up

not having served the message, and it would have been better for me

not to do it.

What you're saying makes me wonder if your approach to humor and how

you view its importance has changed through the years.

It definitely has changed over the years. It's always been something I

have enjoyed doing. I have gotten more selective with it. I have gone

through some eras as a preacher where I've said, I'm too dependent on

humor. For instance, there was one point when almost every talk I did

I would start with something humorous, because when people laugh I get

this kind of internal relaxation. But any time you get into

predictable patterns, that can damage the effectiveness of a sermon. I

had to work to say sometimes I want to start the sermon with different

tones. I might start right off with a challenge or with information

that I want to walk people through, or with something that's going to

touch people's hearts but not in a humorous way.

I've also had eras where again I felt I was getting too dependent on

humor, so I did several messages in a row with little humor, almost as

a discipline to liberate myself from the need for it. There would be

moments where humor came naturally, but I deliberately tried to avoid

it.

How did that go over?

I don't know that those are the best messages I ever did, but they

were helpful in my own development. We have to ask not only the

questions of How can I be helpful to my congregation? but What are the

things that I need to be experiencing to develop as a teacher? How do

I need to stretch myself? I naturally tend to have real sensitive

antenna with regard to, Are people engaged? When I feel people are

starting to disengage, that's painful for me. It's challenging for me

sometimes to allow people to get a little disengaged and to stretch

them so I can help them on the learning side.

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Pt 2

When humor helps a message.

An interview with John Ortberg

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This is part two of a two‑part series.

Would you say that if someone is not naturally humorous they should

attempt it anyway?

That can be dangerous. Yes, I think everybody needs to be able to

incorporate it in a way that fits their personality and style. But

worse than having no humor at all is forcing humor that isn't funny.

There are certain things we always need to watch for. Obviously

anything that's offensive. It never ceases to amaze me, even at large

churches some speakers will make humor about folks who have weight

issues. There's no place for that. That's going to hurt people's

feelings. Inappropriate ethnic humor. Inappropriate jokes at sacred

moments. There are certain moments that are holy, and if you try to

make it a light moment, there's going to be a jarring factor.

Another caution is about telling jokes. The best kind of humor is

observational humor, humor that flows out of life, the incongruities

of life, the way life works. The hardest humor to pull off effectively

is a canned joke with a punch line. That's risky. If there's not a big

laugh, there's that awkward moment where we say, That story died. Many

of us have experienced that kind of death, and it ain't fun. Everybody

in the room senses it, and it breaks the momentum of the talk.

On the other hand, I might tell a story about some interaction with my

wife or one of my kids, and there is humor in it, but it's not

dependent on a punch line at the end. That kind of humor generally

works a lot better and is much safer.

How do you cultivate that kind of humor? A part of my brain is always

looking for slices of life, conversations, observations that can help

me teach something, and do it in a fun way. I watch people who do this

kind of humor well. Tony Campolo is a remarkable communicator with

tons of energy who tells stories in engaging ways. Ken Davis is

another. I read certain people. Garrison Keillor is a writer who has

an enormous gift for observational humor. I read his stuff and think,

How does he unpack a story or develop a character in a way that finds

this kind of humor? I look for people who do it well and try to learn

from them.

I have a friend who made an observation from his visits to churches as

a consultant. He said the sense of people connecting with the speaker

came at the first moment of laughter in a message. It's a diagnostic

indicatornot the only one, not the most important onebut a

diagnostic indicator of how strong the connection is between speaker

and listener. Humor can be a barometer.

Another important issue is the relationship between humor and tension.

Humor is a great tension reliever. I remember a remarkable story Ken

Davis told. He talked about how for many years his daughter never said

"I love you" to him. That story produced a lot of tension because this

speaker is talking about his daughter, and everybody felt a poignant

connection with him, but also a tension: Is this going to get

resolved?

Then he told about speaking in the chapel service of the college she

attended. The students all filled out response cards, and afterward

the chaplain handed him a card that read, "I love my dad," and it was

signed by his daughter. Davis took quite a while before he got to that

line. There was a lot of tension. Then he told how he got up from his

seat in the restaurant, went into the bathroom, and said, "She loves

me. She loves me. I can't believe she loves me." The he said, "I

didn't know there was somebody in the stall right next to me." The

laugh that followed broke an enormous moment of tension.

One question you have to ask is, Do I want to relieve the tension with

laughter yet? Or is the tension producing change in people, so I need

to allow the tension to go on? Great communicators are masters of the

art of tension management. Speakers gifted at motivating or at

convicting folks are able to discern how much tension they can

tolerate. They're careful about using humor to relieve tension

prematurely.

Do you think that happens often?

I do. Many go into pastoring with unresolved issues of needing to

please people, needing people to like them and tell them they're doing

a good job. Because of that we often underestimate how much tension

people are able to tolerate, and we underestimate the use of tension

in producing change. We get anxious: People might not be liking me,

or, They might not be liking this part of the message, so we move to

try to relieve tension prematurely.

Another observation: There is a relationship between how effective

humor is and how full the room is. The more full a room, the more

humor will elicit laughs. If the room holds 100 people and has 120

people jammed in it, the anticipation level, the focus, the energy is

high. So when the speaker says something funny, people tend to laugh a

lot. If the room holds 300 folks, and there's that same 120 people,

there's going to be much less laughter. I have to speak differently

when I'm talking to a room that's packed than when I'm talking to a

room that's half full. When a room is full, I can tell stories with a

timing that expects a big laugh to come at certain points. When the

room is less full, the talk has to have more of a continual flow. If

there are moments when people laugh, we can enjoy that, but it's going

to have a different rhythm to it than a room that's packed.

Earlier you talked about turning from what is humorous to a serious

point. How do you make that transition?

Sometimes the transition has to be gradual. Often you can turn on a

dime from something light to something dark. For instance, I've told a

story of mine I call "Who put the stain on the sofa?" It's a fun

story, and it ends up that the joke is on me. Then I say, "Here's the

truth about us. We've all stained the sofa." And I pause because

everybody is engaged by the humor. After the pause, I say, "I lie. I

deceive. I use people. I ignore people. I promote my own agenda." All

of a sudden it's gone from light, fun stuff, to a much deeper level

where I can talk about sin, darkness, guilt, a holy and just God, and

people's hearts are opened. In that case, turning from light to dark

is helpful. You can feel it in the room. It's almost like a surfer

riding on a wave; they're up high and all of a sudden there's that

drop. You can do that.

Much less often can you go from something very serious, dark, somber

to a light moment. That usually takes a much longer process. You have

to walk one step at a time to a place where things feel lighter. When

I'm making a point about sin, guilt, hell, if I try to turn quickly to

something light, I'm going to trivialize everything I've been saying.

The moves are very different in going from light to dark than they are

from dark to light.

Just because something is funny, even hilariously funny, don't use it

if it doesn't fit. The three laws of humor are the same as the three

laws of real estatelocation, location, location. When something fits,

it's going to accomplish much more good, if I can discipline myself to

wait and save it.

You hear messages that come nowhere near the potential they could have

reached because the speaker thought, I heard this story recently. It

got a laugh. I'm going to wedge it into this message even though it

doesn't fit. That's why you can hear one person tell a story and then

somebody else tell itand may even tell it pretty wellbut because it

doesn't fit, it doesn't elicit anywhere near the same response. It

wasn't the right move at that moment. It has to fit, and it has to

serve the ultimate goal of preachingwhich is to have Christ formed in

people.

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Humor ‑ Understanding Humor

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Understanding Humor

Three things that make us laugh.

A Workshop by Ken Davis

You can buy books that have all the variations of humor, but there are

three broad categories that make something funny.

It's just plain true

When somebody identifies a pain, a struggle, that is just plain true;

and we recognize how true it is and how oblivious we have been to

bringing it to our consciousness; we laugh. I wrote a book called How

to Live with Your Parents Without Losing Your Mind. Parents began

writing, "Write one for us. How come you won't write a book for us?"

So I wrote another book entitled, How to Live with Your Kids When

You've Already Lost Your Mind. Every time I said the title people

would laugh.

We go around pretending everything's okay. Someone has defined humor

this way: "Humor is a gentle way to acknowledge human frailty."

That's the way we ought to use it. That's when humor is done properly.

It can also be a way to try and destroy people, but then it ceases to

be humor. I rephrase that definition: "Humor is a way of saying I'm

not okay, and you are not okay, but that's okay." Believers can add,

"Because he loves us anyway."

Show me a person who takes themselves too seriously, and I'll show you

a person who doesn't have a sense of humorevery single timebecause

they're trying to perpetuate the perception of perfection. Nothing

destroys families, corporate teamwork, or creativity more than trying

to pretend you are perfect. You will never take risks, everyou might

fail. We are not perfect. That's why the people who look at my book

title laugh. Parents know they're not perfect. They say things that

not even insane people say. "Hey, if you cut your legs off in that

lawn mower, don't you come running to me!" That's not something a sane

person says.

We say things that have no foundation: "I am sick and tired. I am sick

and tired of it. I have had it with you clear up to here." How many of

you have used that? Or heard it? Where did this come from?

I asked my grandfather when I was writing the book, "Have you ever

heard this?"

He said, "Yes. My grandfather used that."

Where did this begin? Did cave people start this? Some cave guy

grabbed his son by the hair, "I am so sick and tired" Is that why,

when they find the skeletons, they're all swollen right there?

Why do you laugh? You laugh partly because I'm somewhat of an idiot,

but you also laugh because you have said it. It's true.

My sweet wifewe came home from a vacation; we'd been gone for two

weeksshe opened the refrigerator. The most horribleI mean, we have

two dogs; one of them fell over, his little back leg kicking outshe

had forgotten a carton of milk. There is no smell worse than that.

None. There was moss growing around the lip of the carton, it had been

in there so long. This educated, beautiful woman said, "Ken, come

here. Hurry. Smell this." She said, "I think it's spoiled."

I said, "Sweetheart, the dog is dead."

She wakes me in the middle of the night. "Listen!" (How many of you

are married? Does this sound familiar?) "Listen."

Now, I'm in a sound sleep. You could light a match on me. I said,

"What?"

She said, "Shhh, shhh. There it is again."

Now, my body is not touching the bed any more; only the hairs on my

body are touching the bed. I'm waiting for the axe to fall. I'm

waiting for a bullet to come. I know someone's going to kill us right

now.

She says, "It's in the garage. Oh, no, what if he's escaped from?

What if he has a chainsaw?" Then she grabs me and says, "Go see."

If there's a guy in my garage that has escaped from somewhere with a

chainsaw, I am not going to confront him in a pair of Fruit of the

Looms, excuse me. Although my wife said, "I've seen your shorts. It

will probably scare him away."

The simple truth. How many of you have heard Bill Cosby tell a joke?

Let me see your hands. You're all wrong. He's the wealthiest

entertainer on the face of the earth, but I've never heard him tell a

joke. He talks about truth. To My Brother Russell, with Whom I

Slept‑it's one of the most hilarious albums on the face of the earth.

It is about two little kids sharing a bed, drawing a line, and saying,

"You stay over there." It is about Dad coming to the door. They can't

see him, but they can see his shadow. Hilarious stuff about being at

the dentist and trying to talk to the dentist, because he sees smoke

coming up out of his mouth. This is the least risky kind of humor.

I come in the house. My daughter has a fishing line tied around her

tooth. The other end is tied to a doorknob. She is four years old.

She's violently trying to slam the door. Her little head is jerking,

spit is flying out. Boing, boing, the fishing line is singing. I'm

horrified. I said, "What are you doing?"

She said, "I'm pulling my toof."

I said, "Let me feel it."

She said, "I can't. I'm tied to the door."

So I went over to where she was, and I felt her tooth. I said, "It's

not loose."

She said, "It will be." Boing.

I said, "Quit it."

She said, "Leave me alone. I need money."

It contains an element of surprise

Years ago there was a movie, Bambi Meets Godzilla. It was black and

white. The credits roll, and a little deer is there eatinga cute,

tiny, little deer. When the opening credits finish running, a huge

dinosaur foot comes and goes, "Poom!" and all you see is four little

hooves. That's the end of the film.

Why? Surprise. It goes in a different direction than you thought it

would go. Almost all jokes depend on surprise for their humor. One of

the best books on comedy and humor that I have ever seen is called

Comedy Writing Secrets (by Melvin Helitzer, Writer's Digest Books,

1992). It was not written by Christians, so don't expect to read

through it without seeing a bad word or two. I want to read something

it said about comedy:

Comedy is mentally pulling the rug out from each person in your

audience. [Listen to this, Jean Perret wrote this:] But first, you

have to get them to stand on it. You have to fool them, because if

they see you preparing to tug on the rug, they'll move.

A guy walked into a pet shop, and he said, "I'd like a Christian

parakeet."

The other guy said, "What do you mean, you'd like a Christian

parakeet?"

"Well, the last parakeet I had cussed and swore, and I had to kill

it."

The guy says, "Well, we don't have a Christian parakeet, but we have

one that's never said a word. Would you be interested in that one?"

The guy says, "Yeah, but if it swears, I'll pull all his feathers

off."

They guy says, "Well, he doesn't speak."

He brought the parakeet home. The parakeet was with him for two years

and didn't say anything. Then one day he was feeding the parakeet and

accidentally dumped water all over it. His parakeet let flow a line of

blue, horrible languagequestioning the heritage of this man's

background, talking about his mother, terrible things this parakeet

said.

The guy reached in the cage and grabbed it by the neck. It was all

wet, the little parakeet. He opened the freezer and said, "Now, you

will not speak like that in this house, and you're staying in here

until you can decide you won't." He threw him into the freezer, and he

shut the door.

An hour later he came back and opened the door. There were little

icicles hanging off the parakeet. He was still sitting on the shelf

where he had landed, shivering imperceptibly. The guy said, "I am sick

of cursing. It will not happen in my house. You will not say bad words

of any kind. Do you promise?"

The parakeet said, "I promise."

He said, "I'm not going to let you out. I'll let you freeze to death

unless you promise never to say another bad word."

The parakeet said, "I promise. But could you please tell me one

thing?"

The guy said, "What? What do you want to know?"

The parakeet looked down and said, "What did that turkey say?"

It's the element of surprise that causes you to laugh.

It uses exaggeration

None of these elements stands alone. Humor usually involves a variety

of these things. One of my favorite comedians is Steven Wright, who

has the driest delivery I've ever seen. I watched him live one night,

and I couldn't even stand up afterwards.

He said, "I used to make birds levitate." He said, "Nobody cared." He

said, "I had to take my dog to the mental hospital. Something happened

to him. We named him Stay. Come, Stay. Stay, come.'" He said, "I

spilled spot remover on my dog. He's gone." He said, "I bought a

humidifier and a dehumidifier, put them in a room, let them fight it

out." He says, "I heard that if you drop a cat, no matter where you

drop them, they'll always land on their feet. And I heard that if you

drop a piece of buttered bread, it will always land buttered side

down. So I tied a piece of buttered bread to my cat's back."

Steven Wright's humor is intelligent humor. It's not slapstick. It's

not at anyone's expense except his own.

Someone said, "The kind of joke I love the best is the one that makes

me laugh for five minutes and then think for five days." If you know

that surprise, if you know that exaggeration, if you know that truth

makes something funny, then you can make anything funny.

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm here today because God has

laid a message on my heart that I have to give. Mary Had a Little

Lamb.' That's the title of my sermon. Mary HAD a Little Lamb.' Not

could have had or might have had or would have had but past tense, had

a little lamb. Notice the word little. We're not talking about some

humungous ball of wool coming down the mountainside. This is a little

lamb, a small lamb, a tiny lamb. "Lamb" comes from the Greek word

Woolite."

We had 15 Southern Baptist preachers rolling on the floor, partly

because they recognized that little element of truth, partly because

they were laughing at the exaggeration, and partly because they were

surprised.

What you look for is the surprise, the little turn that takes people

in a direction they weren't expecting to go, and the element of truth

that's common to all of us.

Principles for effective use of humor

Let me show you how to do that without totally destroying your

confidence.

Know your style and ability. I love making people laugh until they

hurt. There is nothing I enjoy more than to watch people hold their

sides. Even in my most serious presentations, I love to bring people

back and forth, weaving the truth with the humor, so that one minute

they're laughing and one minute they're crying. I love that.

I had a guy have a heart attack in one of our shows. We refunded 4,000

tickets. I was picking on him. He was laughing so hard he fell out in

the aisle. Everybody roared when he fell over, and then we realized he

was in trouble. Paramedics came in. It took them 20 minutes to

stabilize him. You don't continue a comedy concert after that. I found

out who he was and wrote to him and said, "I'm so sorry."

He wrote back and said, "Don't be sorry. I'm ready to meet the Lord

any time he's ready to meet me. Anyway, I've had four heart attacks. I

want to thank you for the best heart attack I ever had."

But not everybody is wired that way. We live in a society in which

when people hear the word humor they automatically think stand‑up

comedy. Not so. Mark Twain had the kind of humor that cut right to the

soul.

Know your style and ability. If you're not the kind of person who

easily makes people laugh, or you're not the life of the party, you

will probably develop for your ministry a more subtle humor. On the

other hand, don't be afraid to risk. Just choose the places that you

risk. Risk with people who will love you anyway. Risk with people who

will be honest with you. Risk with other creative people who will say,

"If you just turn that phrase a little bit, you can make it much more

funny."

Be aware of the double edge of humor. Occasionally Christian folks

come up to me and say, "I don't think that humor has any place in

Christianity." That's because they don't have a sense of humor.

They're looking for that perception of perfection. The other reason is

they have astutely recognized that almost all humor points out

frailty.

That is a double‑edged sword. I can use the kind of humor that will

make you identify with me because both of us can laugh about what we

know to be true. That's why we parents laugh together. But, by

changing the tone of my voice, the look in my eye, or perhaps even

with the wrong audience, I can use the exact same humor and appear to

lord it over the people in the audience, as though I am putting them

down. Those of you who work with kids, watch junior high kids do this.

I was at a camp one time. A kid came walking around the corner. His

friend said, "Hey, Four Eyes, come on. Let's go play baseball." "Four

Eyes" had glasses thicker than the bottom of Coke bottles. I wanted to

strangle the kid, except I watched what happened. Four eyes came over.

They ran off together. I don't know what Four Eyes called his friend,

but there was some name.

Do you notice your kids have these names? You say, "How cruel."

No, the way they use it is to say, "So you have thick glasses." "So

you're tall." "So you're short." Friends will use that with each

other.

Different ethnic groups have the most hilarious humor within their

groups, white folks included. Sometimes when people from different

ethnic groups get to know each other well enough, they will share that

humor with each other. It is almost never appropriate from the stage

to do it, to demean, or to be misunderstood to demean, another group.

Be aware of double‑edged humor, and never swing that sword when you

think the edge that could destroy might be misunderstood.

Don't commit comedic suicide. Here is comedic suicide: "I've got to

tell you a story. You're going to love this." You're dead. Why? You

told the people, "You are standing on a rug, and I'm going to jerk it

out." If you say, "I'm going to tell you a story, and you're going to

love this," they had better love it.

Do you know what comedians call it among each other when they fail?

They say, "I died." That's because the pain is unbelievably

incredible. Don't commit comedic suicide.

Start with low‑risk humor. Low‑risk humor is telling what your

daughter did last night. Low‑risk humor is telling about the little

boy I saw in the foyer of our church. His mom took him back there. He

was just a little child, could barely talk. He had messed his

britches. Everybody in the room knew he had messed his britches. But

when she unpinned him and pulled down his little britches, the little

boy looked down and said, "Oh, who did that?"

Now, you know what? If you were to use that in an appropriate

situation to point out that we live in a nation of victims, that we

are never willing to take responsibility for our messesif people

don't laugh, have you died? No. It still works as an illustration, the

truthful kind of illustration. Work with that.

When you tell a story that's going to be risky, don't tell it to a

brand new group that just invited you. Tell it to a small group in

your church or to a bunch of your friends, and let them tweak it.

Don't go out there and allow your head to be lopped off, because the

pain is incredible, and you'll probably never try it again. But keep

at it. If you fail the first time, try again.

Watch other people. When somebody succeeds at humor, ask, "What was

funny about that? What did they do that made that so funny?"

Few people who use humor effectively get totally involved with using

their bodies. But be aware: if you're going to use exaggerated,

way‑out‑there humor, I have a little saying that might help you. "If

you're going to make a scene, be seen." If you're going to make half

gestures or be in the least bit timid, you are going to fail. So don't

be timid. And practice it over and over again. And watch other people.

See what makes them successful.

Practice, practice, practice. I tried this story the other day, and it

didn't work. I tried it again, and it didn't work. I tried it again

and again.

I backed out of my own garage, realized I had forgotten my Daytimer. I

can't exist without my Daytimer. I was frantic. I thought, Perhaps it

was in the back seat. I leaned over the back seat and began to dig for

it. Unbeknownst to me, my car was moving forward at about five, ten

miles an hour. (I'm not sure, because I wasn't looking at the

speedometer at the time.) I found my Daytimer. I was delighted. But

out of the corner of my eye I saw things moving past. I'm an educated

person. I deduced that my car was moving. I dropped my Daytimer,

turned to step on the brake, and didn't get there in time. My car hit

a light pole near our home. The mark is still there.

Have you ever had your airbag go off? This is not a pleasant

experience. I had been fooled by TV. It's nothing like on TV, and on

TV they show it in slow motion. The airbag comes out in a big

marshmallowembracing, gentle, "Come to me, I will save you." It's not

like that. It's just boom! You don't know what's happened, because it

happens fast. All you know is that your nose hurts worse than it's

ever hurt before. I couldn't open my eyes for five minutes, because my

glasses were embedded in my head. When I finally did open them, the

airbag was gone. You still don't know what happened. You wonder who

hung the hankie from your steering wheel. I'm going to be honest with

you, a bad word formed in the back of my head. I wanted to curse,

because, boy, when you get right there, it's bad. I started laughing

instead.

I started thinking goofy thoughts. I thought, Who would have known

about an airbag 15 years ago? When I was born, I didn't even know

about seatbelts. There was no such thing. My mother was the safety

device in our car. Do you remember that? You could stand on the front

seat. If there were an accident or trouble, she'd save you. Do you

remember? Eeeeerrr! Flboom! You say, "Mom, why did you hit me?"

"I did that to keep you from going through the windshield."

"Could I go through the windshield next time?"

That's why I loved riding with my grandmother, because she had that

cushion‑y thing there. It was the forerunner to the airbag.

That story started with a tiny experience. That story is exaggerated.

By the way, when I found out how much it cost to replace an airbag,

the bad word came back.

KEN DAVIS, humorist and speaker, is president of Dynamic

Communications, a communications training organization. He is author

of several books, including The Dynamic Communicators Workbook

(Zondervan, 2001).

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Why Serious Preachers Use Humor

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Why Serious Preachers Use Humor (Part 1)

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part one in a four‑part series.

I once introduced a sermon story by saying, "I don't like this story."

Here is approximately what followed:

Fred Craddock tells of a young pastor visiting an elderly woman in the

hospital. The pastor finds the woman to be quite ill, gasping for

breath, and obviously nearing the end of her life. In the midst of

tubes, bags, and beeping medical machines, the pastor reads Scripture

and offers spiritual comfort.

He asks, "Would you like to have prayer before I go?" and the lady

whispers a yes.

The pastor says, "What would you like me to pray for today?"

The patient responds, "That I would be healed."

The pastor gulps. He thinks, The poor lady can't accept the

inevitable. This is like asking God to vaporize the calories from a

dozen Krispy Kremes. She isn't facing reality.The young minister keeps

this to himself and begins to intercede, sort of.

"Lord, we pray for your sustaining presence with this sick sister, and

if it be your will, we pray she will be restored to health and

service. But if it's not your will, we certainly hope she will adjust

to her circumstances."

Have you prayed prayers like that? They're safe prayers. They give God

a way out, an excuse, just in case the request is not in his will, and

he doesn't come through.

Immediately after the pastor puts an amen on this safe prayer, the

woman opens her eyes and sits up in bed. Then she throws her feet over

the side and stands up.

"I think I'm healed!" she cries.

Before the pastor can react, the woman walks over to the door, pulls

it open, and strides down the hospital corridor. The last thing the

pastor hears before she disappears are the words "Look at me, look at

me. I'm healed."

The pastor pushes his mouth closed, gets up, and slowly walks down the

stairs and out to the parking lot. There is no sign of the former

patient. He opens his car door and stops. Looking up to the heavens,

the pastor says, "Please don't ever do that to me again."

I don't like that story. I don't like itbecause I can identify with

him.

This anecdote is not hilarious. However the story is humorously

effective. It has the key characteristics of what makes something

funny.

Three characteristics of humor

Christian author, speaker, and comedian Ken Davis, president of

Dynamic Communications, identifies three elements that make something

funny: truth, exaggeration, and surprise.

Truth The story above contains an element of reality that hearers

recognize as true. It is an admission of human frailty. People

identify with, in this case, praying for things they don't really

expect God to supply.

Exaggeration The whole story is exaggerated, from the overabundance of

life‑support technology, to the ambiguity of the pastor's prayer, to

the immediacy of the woman's recovery. In real life the woman would

still be downstairs paying her bill.

Surprise This is the strong point of the story. As it unfolds, you

can't help but wonder what's going to happen. The pastor's reaction is

completely unexpected. The final twist is my explanation of why I

don't like the story.

Nothing is funny that doesn't have at least one of these

characteristics. How painful it is to be under the impression that we

are saying something comical when it is not. If your stories fall

flat, begin by evaluating them in light of these three categories.

Of course, these are not the only considerations in using humor well,

but before exploring further, it is necessary to ask if humor has any

place at all in the pulpit.

Is there a place for humor in preaching?

Haddon Robinson, preaching professor at Gordon‑Conwell Theological

Seminary, says, "Since preaching deals with life, it has to have some

element of humor. We have to look at life as it's lived and see at

times how absurd it is."

Consider some of the metaphors and statements of Jesus, and it soon

becomes obvious that Jesus was not above introducing a comic element

to make a point. Ken Davis gives the example of Jesus' words recorded

by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that "It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom

of God." Davis pokes fun at attempts to explain the "eye of a needle"

as a city gate, where a camel would have to take off all encumbrances

and kneel down to enter; or the explanation that the word for camel

actually meant "big rope." Such interpretations militate against the

point Jesus makes. Jesus presented a picture so outrageous it was

funny, and yet the subject of salvation could not have been more

serious.

Jesus employed exaggeration. Elton Trueblood was inspired to write the

book The Humour of Christ, when he read Jesus' words about specks and

logs in people's eyes, and the description made his four‑year‑old

laugh. Jesus told stories that provoked surprise. When a Samaritan

stopped to help the half‑dead man, after two religious types passed

the victim by, it was a shocker. A little research into

Samaritan‑Jewish relations at the time shows how laughably implausible

this must have seemed to the hearers. Jesus spoke truth couched in a

smile. Jesus' description of those who "strain out a gnat but swallow

a camel," ( - Matthew 23:24 - Matthew 23:24}) is as amusing as

it is pointed.

John Stott writes, "It seems to be generally agreed that humour was

one of the weapons in the armoury of the Master Teacher." (Between Two

Worlds, 287) If that is accepted, then the question of whether we

should use humor is settled. Perhaps a better question to ask is, What

types of humor do not belong in preaching?

Unfit Humor

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was renowned both for the power of his sermons

and for his wit. Once Spurgeon answered a knock at the door of his

home and was confronted by a man holding a big stick.

The man sprang into the hall and announced that he had come to kill

Spurgeon.

"You must mean my brother," the preacher said, trying to calm the

fellow. "His name is Spurgeon."

But the man would not be dissuaded. "It is the man that makes the

jokes I mean to kill." (Warren Wiersbe, Walking with the Giants, p.

195)

Spurgeon the preacher was no joke teller, but he "had a gift of humor,

and at times it came into play as he preached." (Arnold Dalimore, C.

H. Spurgeon, p. 76) The criticism Spurgeon received prompted him to

defend the use of humor in preaching and to clarify which aspects did

not belong in the pulpit.

Levity is unsuitable Spurgeon emphasizes that humor and levity are not

synonymous. "Cheerfulness is one thing, and frivolity is another; he

is a wise man who by a serious happiness of conversation steers

between the dark rocks of moroseness, and the quicksands of levity."

(Lectures to My Students, p. 151) "We must conquer our tendency to

levity. A great distinction exists between holy cheerfulness, which is

a virtue, and general levity, which is a vice. There is a levity which

has not enough heart to laugh, but trifles with everything; it is

flippant, hollow, unreal. A hearty laugh is no more levity than a

hearty cry." (Lectures to My Students, p. 212)

Spurgeon's differentiations are helpful. Levity is lighthearted to the

point of being inappropriate. Flippancy communicates casual

indifference or disrespect. Frivolous comments are not suitable in

sermons and detract from the grand purpose of preaching. Haddon

Robinson feels that "humor is more often misused in preaching than it

is well‑usedbecause the joke is told for its own sake."

John Piper, author and pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in

Minneapolis, says, "Earnestness is the demeanor that corresponds to

the weight of the subject matter of preaching. The opposite of earnest

is not joyful, but trivial, flippant, frivolous, chipper. It is

possible to be earnest and have elements of humor, though not levity."

("Thoughts on Earnestness in Preaching," an unpublished lecture at The

Bethlehem Institute, Minneapolis, 1999)

Of course the line is not always easily drawn, and one person's witty

insight might be considered glib or juvenile by another. But levity is

the enemy of what Spurgeon and Piper refer to as earnestness.

Earnestness gives preaching energy, fervency, sincerity, and

excellence. Levity tarnishes these qualities, while humor polishes

them.

Excessive humor is counterproductive In an often repeated but

unverified story, Spurgeon responds to a woman expressing her

displeasure over his frequent use of humor by saying, "If you knew how

much I held back, you would give me credit." While self‑discipline is

necessary in all aspects of the sermon, it is most required with

humor. John Piper warns, "There is a place for humor in our lives, but

there is something deeply wrong that we feel compelled to use so much

of it in teaching and preaching and even worshiping." (from the sermon

"Revival and Fasting," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on June 6,

1986)

John Ortberg, author and teaching pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian

Church in Menlo Park, California, went through a period when he felt

humor had become too important to him. Telling a funny story became a

predictable part of every message. He used it to relax when speaking

and to determine that people were with him. Even though the humor was

appropriate and purposeful, Ortberg sensed he was becoming dependent

upon it. To combat that, he disciplined himself to preach several

times in a row using little humor.

Haddon Robinson suggests if we realize we are using humor that doesn't

serve the truth, we need to forgo it for a time. "If I'm addicted to

it, that means I'm going to tell it for its own sake, or my sake, or

the audience's sake, but not for the sake of the truth." "Humour is

legitimate," says John Stott. "Nevertheless, we have to be sparing in

our use of it and judicious in the topics we select for laughter."

(Between Two Worlds, p. 288)

Inappropriate humor has no place Certain subjects must never be

approached in a joking manner. Stories that make fun of a person's

weight, ethnicity, age, political views, or physical limitations are

off limits. Sexual innuendos, foolishness, what - Ephesians

5:4 - Ephesians 5:4} calls "coarse jesting," are unacceptable.

Sacred things cannot be mentioned in any humorous context without

great care. The rite of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's

Table should almost always be avoided as topics of humor. Haddon

Robinson notes "the most humorous things happen when we are trying to

be the most serious." Before mentioning any of those things from the

pulpit, you must be sure you aren't "making light of something God

takes seriously."

I heard a preacher tell about visiting a woman in her mobile home in

an attempt to share the good news. In a single story, he managed to

demean baptism, poverty, evangelism, and obesity.

It is unlikely that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should ever be

invoked in a comedic context. We should not use humor that confirms

stereotypes about God, treats him casually, or otherwise portrays him

inaccurately.

Some humor that references God can be acceptable. For example, Ken

Davis tells about a burglar who breaks into a home only to hear a

voice in the darkness saying, "I see you, and Jesus sees you too."

After discovering the voice belongs to a parrot, the robber goes to

silence the bird, then spots a huge, snarling Doberman next to the

cage. At that point the parrot says, "Sic him, Jesus." Davis walks a

fine line here, but uses the story effectively by pointing out that

this is how many people view God, as ferocious and ready to attack at

the first wrong step.

Beware of putting the "ick" in comical. Author and speaker Fred Smith

uses as a guideline the old saying "While the audience laughed, the

angels cried." Smith says one test of appropriate humor is "Do the

angels laugh too?"

Guided by these cautions, the preacher can be confident that humor can

have an important place in the sermon. Phillips Brooks in his Lectures

on Preaching called humor "one of the most helpful qualities that the

preacher can possess"; and John Stott said, "We should press it

[humor] gladly into service in the cause of the gospel." (Between Two

Worlds, 292) What the preacher must strive for is humor that is

appropriate in topic, timing, and purpose.

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Pt 2

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part two in a four‑part series.

Phillips Brooks in his Lectures on Preaching called humor "one of the

most helpful qualities that the preacher can possess"; and John Stott

said, "We should press it [humor] gladly into service in the cause of

the gospel." (Between Two Worlds, 292) Let's look at nine benefits

that lead serious preachers like these to use humor.

Humor overcomes defenses

John Ortberg says he uses humor for the same reason a surgeon uses

anesthesia: not to put people to sleep, but to prepare and enable them

to receive painful truth they need. Hearers try to defend themselves

against hard truth, and humor can smuggle that truth past their

resistance and automatic defenses. "No other means can so quickly

break the ice, relax inhibitions, and create an attitude of

expectancy." (James Cox, Preaching, 186)

Ortberg says a fast turn from humor to seriousness "catches people off

guard, and all of a sudden you're in much deeper than what they were

expecting." He gives this example:

Many years ago, early on in our marriage, my wife and I sold our

Volkswagen Beetle to buy our first really nice piece of furniture. It

was a sofa. It was a pink sofa, but for that kind of money, it was

called a mauve sofa. The man at the sofa store told us all about how

to take care of it, and we took it home.

We had very small children in those days, and does anybody want to

guess what was the Number One Rule in our house from that day on?

"Don't sit on the mauve sofa! Don't play near the mauve sofa! Don't

eat around the mauve sofa! Don't touch the mauve sofa! Don't breathe

on the mauve sofa! Don't think about the mauve sofa! On every other

chair in the house, you may freely sit, but on this sofathe mauve

sofayou may not sit, for on the day you sit thereon, you will surely

die!"

And then one day came the "Fall." There appeared on the mauve sofa a

stain...a red stain...a red jelly stain. My wife called the man at the

sofa factory, and he told her how bad that was. So she assembled our

three children to look at the stain on the sofa. Laura, who then was

about 4, and Mallory, who was about 2Â, and Johnny, who was maybe 6

months. She said, "Children, do you see that? That's a stain. That's a

red stain. That's a red jelly stain. And the man at the sofa store

says it's not coming out, not for all eternity. Do you know how long

eternity is, children? Eternity is how long we're all going to sit

here until one of you tells me which one of you put the red jelly

stain on the mauve sofa."

For a long time they all just sat there until finally Mallory cracked.

I knew she would. She said, "Laura did it." Laura said, "No I didn't."

Then it was dead silence for the longest time. And I knew that none of

them would confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they had

never seen their mom that mad in their lives. I knew none of them was

going to confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they knew if

they did, they would spend all of eternity in the "Time Out Chair." I

knew that none of them would confess putting the stain on the sofa,

because in fact, I was the one who put the stain on the sofa, and I

wasn't sayin' nuthin'! Not a word!

Ortberg turns from that to say, "Here's the truth about us. We've all

stained the sofa." The humor opened people's hearts, enabling Ortberg

to talk about the serious subjects of sin, guilt, and a holy God.

Fred Smith calls this aspect of humor "lubricating the needle."

Humor relieves tension

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Humor expresses the joy of the Lord

John Ortberg sees joy as a large component of Scripture, the church,

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One way we express that joy is in laughter. The willingness of a

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\webpage{http://pttranscripts.stores.yahoo.net/whyseprusehu1.html

Humor ‑ Why Serious Preacher2

Why Serious Preachers Use Humor (Part 1)

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part one in a four‑part series.

I once introduced a sermon story by saying, "I don't like this story."

Here is approximately what followed:

Fred Craddock tells of a young pastor visiting an elderly woman in the

hospital. The pastor finds the woman to be quite ill, gasping for

breath, and obviously nearing the end of her life. In the midst of

tubes, bags, and beeping medical machines, the pastor reads Scripture

and offers spiritual comfort.

He asks, "Would you like to have prayer before I go?" and the lady

whispers a yes.

The pastor says, "What would you like me to pray for today?"

The patient responds, "That I would be healed."

The pastor gulps. He thinks, The poor lady can't accept the

inevitable. This is like asking God to vaporize the calories from a

dozen Krispy Kremes. She isn't facing reality.The young minister keeps

this to himself and begins to intercede, sort of.

"Lord, we pray for your sustaining presence with this sick sister, and

if it be your will, we pray she will be restored to health and

service. But if it's not your will, we certainly hope she will adjust

to her circumstances."

Have you prayed prayers like that? They're safe prayers. They give God

a way out, an excuse, just in case the request is not in his will, and

he doesn't come through.

Immediately after the pastor puts an amen on this safe prayer, the

woman opens her eyes and sits up in bed. Then she throws her feet over

the side and stands up.

"I think I'm healed!" she cries.

Before the pastor can react, the woman walks over to the door, pulls

it open, and strides down the hospital corridor. The last thing the

pastor hears before she disappears are the words "Look at me, look at

me. I'm healed."

The pastor pushes his mouth closed, gets up, and slowly walks down the

stairs and out to the parking lot. There is no sign of the former

patient. He opens his car door and stops. Looking up to the heavens,

the pastor says, "Please don't ever do that to me again."

I don't like that story. I don't like itbecause I can identify with

him.

This anecdote is not hilarious. However the story is humorously

effective. It has the key characteristics of what makes something

funny.

Three characteristics of humor

Christian author, speaker, and comedian Ken Davis, president of

Dynamic Communications, identifies three elements that make something

funny: truth, exaggeration, and surprise.

Truth The story above contains an element of reality that hearers

recognize as true. It is an admission of human frailty. People

identify with, in this case, praying for things they don't really

expect God to supply.

Exaggeration The whole story is exaggerated, from the overabundance of

life‑support technology, to the ambiguity of the pastor's prayer, to

the immediacy of the woman's recovery. In real life the woman would

still be downstairs paying her bill.

Surprise This is the strong point of the story. As it unfolds, you

can't help but wonder what's going to happen. The pastor's reaction is

completely unexpected. The final twist is my explanation of why I

don't like the story.

Nothing is funny that doesn't have at least one of these

characteristics. How painful it is to be under the impression that we

are saying something comical when it is not. If your stories fall

flat, begin by evaluating them in light of these three categories.

Of course, these are not the only considerations in using humor well,

but before exploring further, it is necessary to ask if humor has any

place at all in the pulpit.

Is there a place for humor in preaching?

Haddon Robinson, preaching professor at Gordon‑Conwell Theological

Seminary, says, "Since preaching deals with life, it has to have some

element of humor. We have to look at life as it's lived and see at

times how absurd it is."

Consider some of the metaphors and statements of Jesus, and it soon

becomes obvious that Jesus was not above introducing a comic element

to make a point. Ken Davis gives the example of Jesus' words recorded

by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that "It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom

of God." Davis pokes fun at attempts to explain the "eye of a needle"

as a city gate, where a camel would have to take off all encumbrances

and kneel down to enter; or the explanation that the word for camel

actually meant "big rope." Such interpretations militate against the

point Jesus makes. Jesus presented a picture so outrageous it was

funny, and yet the subject of salvation could not have been more

serious.

Jesus employed exaggeration. Elton Trueblood was inspired to write the

book The Humour of Christ, when he read Jesus' words about specks and

logs in people's eyes, and the description made his four‑year‑old

laugh. Jesus told stories that provoked surprise. When a Samaritan

stopped to help the half‑dead man, after two religious types passed

the victim by, it was a shocker. A little research into

Samaritan‑Jewish relations at the time shows how laughably implausible

this must have seemed to the hearers. Jesus spoke truth couched in a

smile. Jesus' description of those who "strain out a gnat but swallow

a camel," ( - Matthew 23:24 - Matthew 23:24}) is as amusing as

it is pointed.

John Stott writes, "It seems to be generally agreed that humour was

one of the weapons in the armoury of the Master Teacher." (Between Two

Worlds, 287) If that is accepted, then the question of whether we

should use humor is settled. Perhaps a better question to ask is, What

types of humor do not belong in preaching?

Unfit Humor

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was renowned both for the power of his sermons

and for his wit. Once Spurgeon answered a knock at the door of his

home and was confronted by a man holding a big stick.

The man sprang into the hall and announced that he had come to kill

Spurgeon.

"You must mean my brother," the preacher said, trying to calm the

fellow. "His name is Spurgeon."

But the man would not be dissuaded. "It is the man that makes the

jokes I mean to kill." (Warren Wiersbe, Walking with the Giants, p.

195)

Spurgeon the preacher was no joke teller, but he "had a gift of humor,

and at times it came into play as he preached." (Arnold Dalimore, C.

H. Spurgeon, p. 76) The criticism Spurgeon received prompted him to

defend the use of humor in preaching and to clarify which aspects did

not belong in the pulpit.

Levity is unsuitable Spurgeon emphasizes that humor and levity are not

synonymous. "Cheerfulness is one thing, and frivolity is another; he

is a wise man who by a serious happiness of conversation steers

between the dark rocks of moroseness, and the quicksands of levity."

(Lectures to My Students, p. 151) "We must conquer our tendency to

levity. A great distinction exists between holy cheerfulness, which is

a virtue, and general levity, which is a vice. There is a levity which

has not enough heart to laugh, but trifles with everything; it is

flippant, hollow, unreal. A hearty laugh is no more levity than a

hearty cry." (Lectures to My Students, p. 212)

Spurgeon's differentiations are helpful. Levity is lighthearted to the

point of being inappropriate. Flippancy communicates casual

indifference or disrespect. Frivolous comments are not suitable in

sermons and detract from the grand purpose of preaching. Haddon

Robinson feels that "humor is more often misused in preaching than it

is well‑usedbecause the joke is told for its own sake."

John Piper, author and pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in

Minneapolis, says, "Earnestness is the demeanor that corresponds to

the weight of the subject matter of preaching. The opposite of earnest

is not joyful, but trivial, flippant, frivolous, chipper. It is

possible to be earnest and have elements of humor, though not levity."

("Thoughts on Earnestness in Preaching," an unpublished lecture at The

Bethlehem Institute, Minneapolis, 1999)

Of course the line is not always easily drawn, and one person's witty

insight might be considered glib or juvenile by another. But levity is

the enemy of what Spurgeon and Piper refer to as earnestness.

Earnestness gives preaching energy, fervency, sincerity, and

excellence. Levity tarnishes these qualities, while humor polishes

them.

Excessive humor is counterproductive In an often repeated but

unverified story, Spurgeon responds to a woman expressing her

displeasure over his frequent use of humor by saying, "If you knew how

much I held back, you would give me credit." While self‑discipline is

necessary in all aspects of the sermon, it is most required with

humor. John Piper warns, "There is a place for humor in our lives, but

there is something deeply wrong that we feel compelled to use so much

of it in teaching and preaching and even worshiping." (from the sermon

"Revival and Fasting," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on June 6,

1986)

John Ortberg, author and teaching pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian

Church in Menlo Park, California, went through a period when he felt

humor had become too important to him. Telling a funny story became a

predictable part of every message. He used it to relax when speaking

and to determine that people were with him. Even though the humor was

appropriate and purposeful, Ortberg sensed he was becoming dependent

upon it. To combat that, he disciplined himself to preach several

times in a row using little humor.

Haddon Robinson suggests if we realize we are using humor that doesn't

serve the truth, we need to forgo it for a time. "If I'm addicted to

it, that means I'm going to tell it for its own sake, or my sake, or

the audience's sake, but not for the sake of the truth." "Humour is

legitimate," says John Stott. "Nevertheless, we have to be sparing in

our use of it and judicious in the topics we select for laughter."

(Between Two Worlds, p. 288)

Inappropriate humor has no place Certain subjects must never be

approached in a joking manner. Stories that make fun of a person's

weight, ethnicity, age, political views, or physical limitations are

off limits. Sexual innuendos, foolishness, what - Ephesians

5:4 - Ephesians 5:4} calls "coarse jesting," are unacceptable.

Sacred things cannot be mentioned in any humorous context without

great care. The rite of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's

Table should almost always be avoided as topics of humor. Haddon

Robinson notes "the most humorous things happen when we are trying to

be the most serious." Before mentioning any of those things from the

pulpit, you must be sure you aren't "making light of something God

takes seriously."

I heard a preacher tell about visiting a woman in her mobile home in

an attempt to share the good news. In a single story, he managed to

demean baptism, poverty, evangelism, and obesity.

It is unlikely that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should ever be

invoked in a comedic context. We should not use humor that confirms

stereotypes about God, treats him casually, or otherwise portrays him

inaccurately.

Some humor that references God can be acceptable. For example, Ken

Davis tells about a burglar who breaks into a home only to hear a

voice in the darkness saying, "I see you, and Jesus sees you too."

After discovering the voice belongs to a parrot, the robber goes to

silence the bird, then spots a huge, snarling Doberman next to the

cage. At that point the parrot says, "Sic him, Jesus." Davis walks a

fine line here, but uses the story effectively by pointing out that

this is how many people view God, as ferocious and ready to attack at

the first wrong step.

Beware of putting the "ick" in comical. Author and speaker Fred Smith

uses as a guideline the old saying "While the audience laughed, the

angels cried." Smith says one test of appropriate humor is "Do the

angels laugh too?"

Guided by these cautions, the preacher can be confident that humor can

have an important place in the sermon. Phillips Brooks in his Lectures

on Preaching called humor "one of the most helpful qualities that the

preacher can possess"; and John Stott said, "We should press it

[humor] gladly into service in the cause of the gospel." (Between Two

Worlds, 292) What the preacher must strive for is humor that is

appropriate in topic, timing, and purpose.

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Pt 2

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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most helpful qualities that the preacher can possess"; and John Stott

said, "We should press it [humor] gladly into service in the cause of

the gospel." (Between Two Worlds, 292) Let's look at nine benefits

that lead serious preachers like these to use humor.

Humor overcomes defenses

John Ortberg says he uses humor for the same reason a surgeon uses

anesthesia: not to put people to sleep, but to prepare and enable them

to receive painful truth they need. Hearers try to defend themselves

against hard truth, and humor can smuggle that truth past their

resistance and automatic defenses. "No other means can so quickly

break the ice, relax inhibitions, and create an attitude of

expectancy." (James Cox, Preaching, 186)

Ortberg says a fast turn from humor to seriousness "catches people off

guard, and all of a sudden you're in much deeper than what they were

expecting." He gives this example:

Many years ago, early on in our marriage, my wife and I sold our

Volkswagen Beetle to buy our first really nice piece of furniture. It

was a sofa. It was a pink sofa, but for that kind of money, it was

called a mauve sofa. The man at the sofa store told us all about how

to take care of it, and we took it home.

We had very small children in those days, and does anybody want to

guess what was the Number One Rule in our house from that day on?

"Don't sit on the mauve sofa! Don't play near the mauve sofa! Don't

eat around the mauve sofa! Don't touch the mauve sofa! Don't breathe

on the mauve sofa! Don't think about the mauve sofa! On every other

chair in the house, you may freely sit, but on this sofathe mauve

sofayou may not sit, for on the day you sit thereon, you will surely

die!"

And then one day came the "Fall." There appeared on the mauve sofa a

stain...a red stain...a red jelly stain. My wife called the man at the

sofa factory, and he told her how bad that was. So she assembled our

three children to look at the stain on the sofa. Laura, who then was

about 4, and Mallory, who was about 2Â, and Johnny, who was maybe 6

months. She said, "Children, do you see that? That's a stain. That's a

red stain. That's a red jelly stain. And the man at the sofa store

says it's not coming out, not for all eternity. Do you know how long

eternity is, children? Eternity is how long we're all going to sit

here until one of you tells me which one of you put the red jelly

stain on the mauve sofa."

For a long time they all just sat there until finally Mallory cracked.

I knew she would. She said, "Laura did it." Laura said, "No I didn't."

Then it was dead silence for the longest time. And I knew that none of

them would confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they had

never seen their mom that mad in their lives. I knew none of them was

going to confess putting the stain on the sofa, because they knew if

they did, they would spend all of eternity in the "Time Out Chair." I

knew that none of them would confess putting the stain on the sofa,

because in fact, I was the one who put the stain on the sofa, and I

wasn't sayin' nuthin'! Not a word!

Ortberg turns from that to say, "Here's the truth about us. We've all

stained the sofa." The humor opened people's hearts, enabling Ortberg

to talk about the serious subjects of sin, guilt, and a holy God.

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Humor ‑ Why Serious Preacher3

Why Serious Preachers Use Humor

Pt3

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An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part three in a four‑part series.

Phillips Brooks in his Lectures on Preaching called humor "one of the

most helpful qualities that the preacher can possess"; and John Stott

said, "We should press [humor] gladly into service in the cause of the

gospel." Let's look at six characteristics of effective humor.

Have a purpose

John Ortberg believes that since "the ultimate goal of preaching is to

have Christ formed in people," humor must always be the servant of the

message. If humor does nothing to forward that purpose, then the

preacher must be willing to jettison it from the sermon. Haddon

Robinson says the "cardinal rule of humor is it must serve the truth."

One indication of this is when your audience thinks of the story they

think of the truth that lies behind it.

Of the many benefits of humor listed above, some advantages may not be

sufficient justification for its inclusion. Humor must serve the

greater purpose. We should ask questions such as, In what way does

this contribute to the point being made? How will this enable people

to hear the truth? Why does this story deserve time in this message?

Ken Davis says, "The purpose should be that this humor illustrates a

point, clarifies a point, draws people's attention to a point that is

going to take them one step closer to the cross."

Effective humor will be entertaining, and there is nothing wrong with

that. Entertainment is wrong when it becomes the objective or becomes

an end in itself. We can cross the line into that simply by our

timing. John Ortberg suggests that when we rush to relieve tension

through humor, it indicates a self‑esteem issue. Our inability to wait

for tension to have its greatest spiritual effect may be because we

are too anxious for people to like us. When the preacher is concerned

with keeping people happy, truth‑telling has been compromised.

Be neither offensive nor innocuous

Preaching will always offend someone. The solution is not bland

speech. Instead, we must strictly monitor those things we intend to be

funny. Ask yourself who might consider this offensive and know that

your own sensitivities are not always trustworthy.

One high profile speaker told a news story that involved the attempted

electrocution of a pig. The speaker told this with glee, even the part

where two farmers ended up dead, one was critically injured, and the

pig was unharmed. I've learned the hard way that any story involving

the endangerment of an animal should only be used with extreme

caution. The problem with this story was not that it didn't serve the

messagebelieve it or not, it did. But the real loss of human life

should not be a source of casual mirth. The contribution the story

made to the point was overshadowed by its insensitivity.

Humor used in the pulpit should not make someone cringe. Hurtful humor

can be damaging even if it does not offend the "victim." Ken Davis

warns that the preacher may good‑naturedly rib a friend, but others

don't know this comes out of friendship and take offense for that

other person.

Be selective

John Ortberg says the laws of humor are the same as the laws of real

estatelocation, location, location. The right story must come at the

right time in the message. Fred Smith believes in using it like good

spice, "permeating the whole," but there are moments when humor should

be avoided. Ortberg speaks of times when there was a tender spirit in

the room, and he realized something humorous he intended to say might

disrupt that spirit. Discipline is needed "because there's something

else going on that's more important than humor."

Fred Smith writes, "Humor should be used to sharpen the truth, not

dull it." This is a determining factor in the placement of humor. It

must not only be in the right place in the message but in the right

message. In the rush to use something good, we must resist the urge to

wedge it in where it does not belong. Ortberg says, "When it really

fits, it's going to accomplish much more good. I have to discipline

myself, wait, and save it for that time."

Be self‑deprecating without becoming self‑centered

Humor can be an expression of humility if the speaker is secure enough

to poke fun at himself. Haddon Robinson writes, "We like people who

laugh at themselves, because they are saying, 'What I'm talking about

is very serious, but I don't take myself too seriously.'" (Mastering

Contemporary Preaching, p. 134) When the speaker is the butt of the

joke, this lowers the defenses of listeners even further to the

scalpel of truth.

In a sermon from , I challenged the congregation to pray impossible

prayers. I said I myself was trying to grow in that area. I told of

four impossible prayers I had once prayed for daily. Eventually I

concluded the answer to the first two prayers was "No," the answer to

number three was "Not yet," and prayer number four I gave up on

entirely. I said:

I quit my impossible prayer. What a great prayer warrior I am. But in

these last few weeks my wife has had four amazing answers to prayer,

at least two of which were impossible. One was the exact request I'd

given up on. She can pray, she can preachI think you've got the wrong

one of us as pastor.

People appreciated that little insight more than I could have

imagined. My wife thought highly of the story also.

The caution is we should watch that we don't talk about ourselves too

much. Ken Davis says to take care "that the word self doesn't become a

huge part of our messages."

Practice but be open to spontaneity

John Ortberg warns, "Worse than having no humor at all is forcing

humor that isn't funny."

To avoid that, Ken Davis says humor is a tool we must practice with to

learn to operate well. He believes with a little work, just about

anything can be funny. Preachers need to look at something that made

them chuckle and figure out why it struck them as funny. When that

lesson is understood, we can learn to present stories in a way that

will produce the same response from our audience.

Practice ways not to introduce stories with "A funny thing happened to

me the other day." Practice the flow of stories on one or two people

until the timing and wording is honed. Humor comes less from what you

say than from how you say it.

Practice should not preclude spontaneous humor, which can sometimes be

the most effective.

A family in our church was moving. The husband told me he was only

known in the church as "Kim's husband" because she was so involved and

he traveled so much. She would be greatly missed, but he doubted we

would know he was gone. With his permission I told that story during a

sermon from about significance. I repeated our conversation and began

to emphasize his great worth to his family and church. It started to

get emotional. Suddenly a thought hit me and I said, "Now if somebody

could point this guy out to me" The room went nuts.

Take care, though; these unplanned additions are also the most

dangerous because you have only moments to filter and evaluate what

you are going to say.

Observe daily life

Humor flowing from life experiences always trumps jokes with punch

lines. Jokes are what Ken Davis calls high‑risk humor. If a joke dies,

everyone knows it, and the point may die with it. When a personal

story doesn't elicit the laugh you thought it would, it still

maintains the power to illustrate the point. That's why Davis calls

this low risk humor and suggests this is where someone trying to learn

to be more humorous should begin. So avoid joke books and pay more

attention to what is going on around you.

John Ortberg says, "The best kind of humor is observational humor,

humor that flows out of the incongruities of life and the way life

works." Haddon Robinson talks about the power of humor that is "an

observation about life that causes me to laugh and at the same time

gives me insight."

There is no lack of material. "Life's experiences bring more humor

than you could ever use in a million years," says Ken Davis. Preachers

need to be aware of how everyday things can be funnyeven those things

that were not funny at the time. Davis tells a story about a minor car

accident that set off the air bag. He says TV doesn't tell you the

truth when they picture the air bag coming out like a salvation

marshmallow. In his experience the impact painfully bloodied his nose.

Davis turns the painful incident into a riotously funny story.

\webpage{http://pttranscripts.stores.yahoo.net/whyseprusehu2.html

Pt 4

Discernment for light moments with a weighty purpose.

An article by John Henry Beukema

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This is part four in a four‑part series.

This week we look at seven more characteristics of effective humor.

Focus on a common truth

Talk about experiences others identify with. Ken Davis ties into a

common feeling among men with this observation:

There's proof in the Mall of America that men weren't supposed to

shop. The proof is the 180 miles of benches, and there are no women on

those benches, only men. I saw an 80‑or 90‑year‑old guy with cobwebs

hanging from his head. The sad part was that he wasn't 90 when he went

into the mall.

Humor based on truth, then in this case exaggerated, gets people

nodding and laughing in agreement. It may be something overlooked by

the average person until you focus on it.

Be yourself

While Ortberg and Davis agree that we must work at humor, especially

those of us who are not naturally funny, nevertheless we shouldn't try

to become someone we are not. Humor must fit our personality and

style. Haddon Robinson says, "If you don't do it within conversation,

you are wise to avoid it in public."

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style. Haddon Robinson says, "If you don't do it within conversation,

you are wise to avoid it in public."

Ken Davis says, "It's important to know your own style and ability. My

tendency is to be way out there." But Davis admires comedian Steven

Wright, who speaks slowly and unemotionally. He simply puts together

truths that are rarely observed. For example, Wright points out that

if you drop a buttered piece of toast, it will always fall butter side

down. And if you drop a cat, he will always land on his feet. "So the

other day I tied a piece of buttered toast to my cat's back."

If Steven Wright tried to act like Robin Williams, it wouldn't work.

But he delivers lines in a way that fits his personality, and it's

hilarious. Davis says, "Humor isn't necessarily that 'lay on the floor

and laugh till you're sick' kind of thing. Sometimes it's just a

comment that makes people smile and think, Man, that is so true.

That's humor."

Be gracious

Poking fun at someone other than yourself is a minefield. Sometimes

speakers feel that an infamous celebrity is fair game. That

celebrity's lifestyle is so out of line with biblical morality that

the speaker thinks little of holding that person up for ridicule.

Haddon Robinson uses this guideline, "If that person was sitting in

the front row when I made the remark, would they feel it was a cheap

shot?"

Humor that is suitable for preaching tears down no one, no matter how

justifiable it feels. If a celebrity or anyone the hearer appreciates

is mocked, the point being made is lost. "Let your conversation be

always full of grace, seasoned with salt," ( - Colossians

4:6 - Colossians 4:6}).

Be honest about exaggeration

Exaggeration is legitimate in humor, and using hyperbole does not

cause hearers to stop taking us seriously if we signal to hearers that

we are using humor. Ken Davis says, "It's important to maintain

integrity." He says at some point there needs to be something like a

wink to the audience. Davis says that with his gestures and tone he

becomes bigger than life. This clues in the audience that he's telling

the story bigger than it actually happened. He suggests there may be a

need to say, "You know it didn't happen quite that way," or to roll

your eyes.

Preachers get themselves into trouble when they insist that a story is

true when it exceeds the bounds of reality. To qualify with the words,

"I don't know if this story is true," doesn't take away anything from

it and gives the audience permission to have fun rather trying to

determine the veracity of the speaker.

Keep the surprise

Introducing something funny by calling it funny is disastrous. It's

harder to surprise people. For some people an automatic resistance

kicks in. They cross their arms and think, I'll be the judge of that.

The story had better be funny, or the speaker is climbing out of a

deep hole for the rest of the talk.

Credit sources

Nothing dampens the effectiveness of humor more surely or our

credibility more quickly than presenting someone else's humor as our

own or someone else's experience as our own.

Giving proper credit does not take away from the enjoyment of the

story. I once told a Ken Davis story in a sermon. I acknowledged him

at the beginning, and everyone still laughed hard. Afterward a number

of people mentioned to me they had heard the story before. Had I

failed to give credit, I would have paid for it.

Transition carefully between what is serious and what is light

John Ortberg believes it is much easier to transition from light, fun

material to serious issues like guilt and sin than it is to move in

the other direction.

Ken Davis gives this example of a sudden shift from light to serious:

I read the response of children to what they thought love was. One

little child thought love was when "a boy puts on cologne and a girl

puts on perfume, and then they go on a date and smell each other." One

little girl said, "I think love is when my grandma can't move anymore;

she's in a wheelchair, and my grandpa clips her toenails even when he

has arthritis, and he can't move his hands."

When going from seriousness to humor, in general we should do so

gradually, in a step‑by‑step process. Otherwise, Ortberg says, "I'm

going to trivialize everything I've been saying." A sacred moment will

be intruded upon and lost.

An unexpected benefit of a humorous story

In a sermon on the supremacy of Christ, I used my personal feelings

humorously to make a serious point. I said weddings are my least

favorite pastoral duty. There was nervous laughter. I said I felt that

way because so much could go wrong. I feared two outcomes: the mother

of the bride would hate me, or I would end up on America's Funniest

Home Videos.

I went on. As a pastor in training I'd been warned about

photographers. They were the enemy, seeking to disrupt every ceremony.

It didn't take long for me to see this was no idle threat.

Photographers ran up and down center aisles, blinded us with flashes,

and whispered stage directions during the vows. The worst was the guy

who got on his hands and knees and crawled behind the choir rail. I

heard him scurrying along behind me, and then every few feet he would

pop his head over the rail and snap a few pictures.

I acted all this out. It was a riot. I concluded with these words.

The way I see it, weddings are the legal, spiritual, public joining

together of two lives. They are not primarily a photo opportunity.

Someday I'm going to grab one of those photographers by the throat and

scream, "It's not about you." You came here today with something on

your mind. Maybe you were consumed with your plans, struggling with

loneliness, anxious about your marriage, or worried about money. These

concerns are all secondary. The gospel shouts, "It's all about Jesus."

This proved to be a powerful story. "It's all about Jesus" is a

popular theme in our church. And I'm asked to do fewer weddings.

\webpage{http://pttranscripts.stores.yahoo.net/whyseprusehu3.html

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Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

- 9/2011.101

Sermon‑Blessings & Honor

Blessed 2 B A Blessing

- Genesis 12:2 (NIV) - Genesis 12:2 NIV} "I will make you

into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Mighty (Power) Words

Mandate of Blessing and Honor

Methods of Blessings and Honor (Elements of a Blessing)

1. 1. Mighty (Power) Words

\* God said and created. - Genesis 1:3 - Genesis 1:3},

- 6 - Genesis 1:6}, - 9 - Genesis 1:9},

- 11 - Genesis 1:11}, - 14 - Genesis 1:14},

- 20 - Genesis 1:20}, - 24 - Genesis 1:24},

- 26 - Genesis 1:26}. Built Up.

God calledand it was good ‑ - Genesis 1:10 - Genesis 1:10

Identified.

God blessed ‑ - Genesis 1:22 - Genesis 1:22},

- 28 - Genesis 1:28} Multiplied.

\* Jesus ‑ - John 1:1 NIV - John 1:1 NIV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the

Word was God ( - John 1:1 NIV) - John 1:1 NIV

- Luke 7:2 - Luke 7:2} centurion 7 say in a word...my servant

shall be healed

Doctor Fear or Freedom

Umpire ‑ Win or Lose

Judge ‑ Free or Imprisoned

\* God's Word ‑ - Jeremiah 23:29 - Jeremiah 23:29

Build up, tear down, burn or warm?

\* Words In The Home

Finish this... "Sticks and stones may break my bones but...."

Finish this song...

Oh, Give Me a Home

Where the Buffalo Roam

And the Deer

and the Antelope Play

Where Seldom Is Heard

Today? An Encouraging

\* Magnetism Words Attract or Repel?

- Colossians 4:6 (KJV) - Colossians 4:6 KJV} Let your speech

be alway with grace, seasoned with salt...

Salt Creates Thirst Do We Make People Thirsty for Jesus?

- Matthew 5:6 (KJV) - Matthew 5:6 KJV} Blessed are they

which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be

filled.

\* People Could Be Won by Your Words (Lifestyle)

- 1 Peter 3:1 (KJV) - 1 Peter 3:1 KJV} Likewise, ye wives,

be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word,

they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the

wives;

\* Death and Life ‑ - Proverbs 18:21 - Proverbs 18:21 -

- Proverbs 10:11 - Proverbs 10:11

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

( - Proverbs 18:21 - Proverbs 18:21}).

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life

( - Proverbs 10:11 NIV) - Proverbs 10:11 NIV}.

\* Negative Words ‑ - Ps. 57:4 - Psalms 57:4 -

- 64:3 - Psalms 64:3 - - Ps. 140:3 - Psalms 140:3 -

- Jer. 9:3 - Jeremiah 9:3 - - Jer. 9:8 - Jeremiah

9:8 - - Hos. 7:16 - Hosea 7:16

cut like a sword ( - Ps. 57:4 - Psalms 57:4 -

- 64:3 - Psalms 64:3})

be as dangerous and poisonous as a snake ( - Ps.

140:3 - Psalms 140:3})

convey lies with the impact of a bow ( - Jer. 9:3 - Jeremiah

9:3})

strike down other people like an arrow ( - Jer. 9:8 - Jeremiah

9:8})

leaders could fall because of the tongue ( - Hos. 7:16 - Hosea

7:16})

Big trees fall, destroys MANY small trees.

Discuss #1: What "Words" have changed/shaped your life? What words

have been shared (older to younger ‑ ALL), that have stayed with you

all your life?

Example: HEC ‑ Mom said, "One day, you are going to be a doctor." (As

I reflect, I believe she meant at the time a doctor of medicine, many

years later, I became of doctor of ministry.)

5 Minutes

2. Mandate of Blessing and Honor

\* Bless, Not Curse ‑ - 1 Peter 3:9 - 1 Peter 3:9

We Are Called to Bless and Not Curse

- 1 Peter 3:9 (NIV) - 1 Peter 3:9 NIV} Do not repay evil

with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this

you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

\* Blessing ‑ (G2129 eulogia, yoo‑log‑ee'‑ah) is where we get our word

"eulogy" ‑ to speak well of.

\* Bless, Not Curse ‑ - James 3:9‑10 - James 3:9‑10

- James 3:9 (NIV) - James 3:9 NIV} With the tongue we praise

our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in

God's likeness.

10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this

should not be.

We Are to Bless and Honor...

\* Marked by God ‑ Reflect Christian Character Traits (What gets

praise, acknowledged, gets done.) Not what the world honors ‑

beauty, brains, brawns & bucks

adventurous, affectionate, attentive, calm, careful, cheerful,

confident, considerate, courageous, daring, dependable, determined,

easygoing, efficient, encouraging, fair, faithful, fearless, fierce,

friendly, gentle, giving, good, graceful, grateful, happy, helpful,

honest, hopeful, humorous, imaginative, industrious, innocent, kind,

loving, loyal, mature, nice, obedient, patient, peaceful, pleasant,

polite, positive, quick, quiet, rational, reliable, respectful,

responsible, satisfied, sharp, skillful, stubborn (in a good way),

sweet, talented, thankful, thoughtful, tolerant, trusting,

trustworthy, useful, warm (PICK 1 2, Note)

\* Mature ‑ Seniors

- Leviticus 19:32 (KJV) - Leviticus 19:32 KJV} Thou shalt

rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and

fear thy God: I am the LORD. (NIV) "'Rise in the presence of the

aged, show respect for the elderly... (NASB) 'You shall rise up

before the grayheaded, and honor the aged...

Do we do this today? Yes!

When the judge enters the courtroom We stand. The President. People

of honor.

\* Magnifiers ‑ Those That Honor God ‑ - 1 Samuel 2:30 - 1

Samuel 2:30

- 1 Samuel 2:30 (NIV) - 1 Samuel 2:30 NIV} ...the LORD ...

Declares ... Those who honor me I will honor...

\* Ministers ‑ Leaders ‑ - 1 Thes 5:12‑13 - 1 Thessalonians

5:12‑13}.

- 1 Thes 5:12 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12} know them which labour

among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 (NIV)

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work....

Those who are ‑ Marvelous, Mastery, Matchless, Memorable, Mighty,

Monumental ‑ We bless them by expressing gratitude for them

( - Rom. 1:8 - Romans 1:8 - - 1 Cor. 1:4 - 1

Corinthians 1:4 - - 2 Cor. 1:11 - 2 Corinthians 1:11 -

- Phil. 1:3‑5 - Philippians 1:3‑5 - - Col.

1:3‑6 - Colossians 1:3‑6 - - 2 Thess. 1:3 - 2 Thessalonians

1:3}).

Remember ‑ Respond Respect. Discover, Develop, Deploy (gifts).

See bobbyclinton.com.

\* Motivate to Receive the Gospel

Before you give the Gospel

Jesus' ODD Style of Ministry ‑ Think 5, 7, 9

- Luke 10:5 - Luke 10:5} Bless

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this

house.

- Luke 10:7 - Luke 10:7} Fellowship

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking .

- Luke 10:9 - Luke 10:9} Meet Their Needs ‑ Allow the Divine

to Work. (Opens their heart.)

And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them,

The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

\* Mistake ‑ Do Not Honor Self

Let another praise thee.

- Proverbs 27:2 (NIV) - Proverbs 27:2 NIV} Let another

praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own

lips.

You can't be the hero of every story you tell.

- 2 Corinthians 4:5 (KJV) - 2 Corinthians 4:5 KJV} For we

preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your

servants for Jesus' sake.

Who is the hero? Jesus!

Frog, 2 Birds, backpack

Discuss #2: Of the Many Mandates, What Speaks to You and Why? Can

You Think of Other Biblical Mandates That Would Motivate Someone to

Bless and Honor More? What Christian Characteristic Could You

Example: Cheerful ‑ Joy of the Lord.‑ Kindness ‑ Fruit of the Spirit

in Your Life.

3. 3. Methods of Blessings and Honor (Elements of a Blessing)

\* Management ‑ Spirit Led ‑ the Test ‑ Does it Edify? Exhort? Comfort?

- 1 Corinthians 14:3 (KJV) - 1 Corinthians 14:3 KJV} But he

that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation,

and comfort.

No Prophets of Doom. The Gospel ‑ Good News!

\* Moms & Dads ‑ Naturally Bless Their Children

10,000 Teachers, few Fathers & Mothers

- 1 Corinthians 4:15 (KJV) - 1 Corinthians 4:15 KJV} For

though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not

many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the

gospel.

Who spoke to their children ‑ BEFORE giving birth?!? (What did you

say?) (Me/Banjo.)

- 1 Corinthians 15:49 - 1 Corinthians 15:49 -

- Phil 4:9 - Philippians 4:9 - - 1 Cor4:16 - 1

Corinthians 4:16 - - 1 Cor 11:1 - 1 Corinthians 11:1 -

- Phil 3:17 - Philippians 3:17 - - 1 Thes 1:6 - 1

Thessalonians 1:6}.

- 1 Corinthians 15:49 - 1 Corinthians 15:49} And as we have

borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the

heavenly.

WE MUST CHANGE ‑

Malleable ‑ Be Shaped in His Image

- 1 Cor 15:31 - 1 Corinthians 15:31} die daily

- Jn 3:30 - John 3:30} He increase I decrease

- Eph 4:13 - Ephesians 4:13} perfect man ‑ measure ‑

stature Christ

- Phil 4:9 - Philippians 4:9} Those thingsseen in me, do:

and the God of peace shall be with you.

- 1 Cor4:16 NIV - 1 Corinthians 4:16 NIV}imitate me.

- 1 Cor 11:1 - 1 Corinthians 11:1} Be ye followers of me,

even as I also am of Christ.

- Phil 3:17 NIV - Philippians 3:17 NIV}Join with others in

following my examplelive according to the pattern we gave you.

- 1 Thes 1:6 NIV - 1 Thessalonians 1:6 NIV}You became

imitators of us and of the Lord

Mask‑less ‑ Not Wearing a Mask (Moses) - 2 Cor 3:7 - 2

Corinthians 3:7}. - 2 Timothy 1:5 - 2 Timothy 1:5} unfeigned

faith

Paul & Timothy ‑ Son in the Lord ‑ - 1 Timothy 1:2 - 1

Timothy 1:2}, - 2 Timothy 1:2 - 2 Timothy 1:2}. Paul &

- Titus ‑ Titus 1:4 - Titus 1:1‑4}. - 2 Timothy

2:2 - 2 Timothy 2:2}, - Joel 1:3 - Joel 1:3}.

- 1 Timothy 1:2 - 1 Timothy 1:2} ... Timothy, my own son in

the faith...

- 2 Timothy 1:2 - 2 Timothy 1:2} ... Timothy, my dearly

beloved son...

Paul & - Titus ‑ Titus 1:4 (NIV) - Titus 1:1‑4 NIV} To

Titus, my true son in our common faith

- 2 Timothy 2:2 - 2 Timothy 2:2} Paul, Timothy, faithful men,

others

- Joel 1:3 - Joel 1:3} Tell children, children tell it to

their children, and their children to the next generation.

\* Mantles ‑ Elijah to Elisha ‑ - 1 Kings 19:19 - 1 Kings

19:19}.

What Are You Passionate About?

What Are You Passing On?

Who Are You Passing it on To?

Bill Walsh‑NFL

\* Move To Touch ‑ - Matthew 19:15 - Matthew 19:15},

- Matthew 8:3 - Matthew 8:3}, - Romans 16:16 - Romans

16:16 -

The people brought the children to Jesus "to touch them"

( - Matthew 19:15 - Matthew 19:15}).

Jesus touched lepers ( - Matthew 8:3 - Matthew 8:3}).

The "holy kiss" was mentioned four times ( - Romans

16:16 - Romans 16:16 - - 1 Corinthians 16:20 - 1 Corinthians

16:20 - - 2 Corinthians 13:12 - 2 Corinthians 13:12 -

- 1 Thessalonians 5:26 - 1 Thessalonians 5:26}).

This was acceptance, a sign of mutual affection and fellowship. We

use the handshake of western society.

\* Money, Time, Resources ‑

- 1 Timothy 5:17 (KJV) - 1 Timothy 5:17 KJV} Let the elders

that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who

labour in the word and doctrine.

Honor (G5092, time, tee‑may) money, pay, valuables.

Same word ‑ - 1 Peter 3:7 - 1 Peter 3:7} Likewise, ye

husbands... giving honour unto the wife...

Remember We are Rivers ‑ Not Reservoirs

Blessings & Honor

Mighty (Power) Words (God, Jesus, Word, Home, Magnetism ‑ Attract or

Repel, Death and Life)

Mandate (Bless not curse, Marked by God‑Christian Character Traits,

Mature Seniors, Magnifiers‑Those That Honor God, Motivate to Receive

the Gospel)

Methods ‑ Elements of a Blessing (Management ‑ Spirit Led, Moms &

Dads, Mantles, Move To Touch, Money, Time, Resources)

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Listen to Paul's Blessing... (As He Writes His Letters)

Beloved of God, God Loves You So Much. You Are His Chosen People

- Romans 1:7 (KJV) - Romans 1:7 KJV} To all that be in Rome,

beloved of God, (NLT loved by God ) (HEC ‑ God loves you SO much)

called to be saints: (NLT ‑ called to be his own holy people) (HEC ‑

He's counting on you to be His holy people.)

I Thank God for You, for Your Faith. I Pray for You Always. I So Want

to See You. I Want to Give to You.

( - Romans 1:8 - Romans 1:8} First, I thank my God through

Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the

whole world. (NASB) because your faith is being proclaimed throughout

the whole world. - Romans 1:9 - Romans 1:9} w ithout ceasing

I make mention of you always in my prayers; - Romans 1:11

(KJV) - Romans 1:11 KJV} For I long to see you, that I may impart

unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established)

Discuss #3: In Prayer tonight, what "Blessing" would you like for

someone to pray with you? What do you want to pass on? What CAN NOT

die with you? What blessing have you received now you want to pass

it on?

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September 17, 2011, Phoenix, AZ, Generations Conference, Grace

Community Church

/mPastors

/sPastor's Job Description AR

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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/fN

The Pastor's Job DescriptionElder, Shepherd & Bishop

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a

witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory

that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you,

taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not

for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over

God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief

Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth

not away"

(1 Peter 5:14 KJV).

Here is the pastor's job description:

Introduction:

KEY‑ Session I: elder, shepherd, bishop, maturity, ministry,

management, genuine experience, glowing enthusiasm, godly example,

fade away, strive for.

You are an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( Elder, Shepherd, Bishop )

The word Elder speaks of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( maturity)

The word Shepherd speaks of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( ministry)

The word Bishop speaks of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( management ‑

overseer)

(Not a noun but the verb ‑ to overseer

The pastor's is the greatest calling and the worst profession. Don't

do it for money.

Introduction

I. The pastor's solemn requirements

1. The pastor is to be a man of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( genuine experience)

Elder, witness, partaker of the glory.

2. The pastor is to be a man of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( glowing enthusiasm) v2, willingly, not for

lucre ‑ ready mind

Strike oil or stop Boring

Abe Lincoln ‑ bees

3. The pastor is to be a man of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( godly example ) v3, not lords but examples.

You may not be sin‑less but blame‑less

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II. The pastor's sure reward

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of

glory that fadeth not away" ( - 1 Peter 5:4 KJV) - 1 Peter 5:4

KJV}.

1. Your reward will be a crown that does not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( ) (Fade away)

Pastor ‑ Flood, praying, God said ‑ I was going to burn it anyway.

2. The honors and laurels of this world are temporal. Be careful what

you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( ) (strive for)

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The Pastor As Elder

Session II

02. The Pastor's Personal Integrity

KEY ‑ Session II: blameless, character, undivided, hide, fear,

Emotional, heart, Intellectual, mind, Volitional, will, negative,

self‑willed, uncontrolled temper, uncontrolled appetites, violent,

greedy, positive, Hospitable, good, Self‑controlled, Upright, Holy,

Disciplined.

Session III: choice, right choices, wrong thing, Praying, Preaching,

evaluate, eliminate, delegate, family, Faithfulness, Love.

Session IV Part One: at home, equality, faith, roles, privilege,

responsibility, equals, covenant, contentment, little, bitterness,

hellish, human, heavenly, communication, disintegrate, skills,

self‑centered, Bitterness, Distractions, Fear, insecurity, roof,

walls, Busyness, sensitive, self‑centeredness, put right, fun, plans,

four dates, God, kids, yourself, mate, romance, courtship.

Session IV Part Two: leadership, example, firm, fun, fair, family

worship, house of God, prayer.

Session V: avoid sexual sin, Spirit, own marriage, priority, flesh,

unexpected, undetected, unprotected, wife, other women, consequences.

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose

children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and

disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must

be blamelessnot overbearing, not quicktempered, not given to

drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain" (Titus 1:67

NIV).

An elder must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Blameless)

Leadership and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Character) are inextricably

interwoven.

I. The definition of integrity: A person with an

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Undivided) life.

"A person with integrity has nothing to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, ( hide ) and

nothing to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ( fear )

Single Eye

II. The dimensions of integrity

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( emotional ) IntegrityA single

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.( Heart )

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(Love not the world.)

(Blameless, not sinless.)

(If oil light comes on, just take a hammer and brake the light. That's

what people are doing when the red light "sin" is lit.)

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2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (intellectual ) IntegrityA single

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.( Mind )

( - James 1 - James 1}.8)

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( volitional ) IntegrityA single

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.( Will ) (9:21)

(Single eye)

III. The dynamics of integrity

Paul speaks of five \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (negative ) characteristics that

should not be found in the man of God.

"not overbearing, not quicktempered, not given to drunkenness, not

violent, not pursuing dishonest gain" ( - Titus 1:7

NIV) - Titus 1:7 NIV}.

1. He should not be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (self‑willed)

(You teach a man his rights

2. He should not have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(Be a time‑bomb)

"The only way to be angry and sin not is to be angry at sin."

(Do not lose your temper. You can know a man by what makes him:

Laugh, weep, angry.)

3. He should not have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(Uncontrolled appetites)

(We live off of what we eat and the doctor lives off the other

half. )

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4. He should not be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( violent )

5. He should not be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( greedy )

(lk 16.10‑11, never preach for money as the motivation)

There are also some \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ characteristics of the elder.

(Positive )

"Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is

self‑controlled, upright, holy and disciplined" ( - Titus 1:8

NIV) - Titus 1:8 NIV}.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Hospitable )

2. Loves what is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_( good )

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‑ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Self‑controlled)

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Upright)

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Holy)

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Disciplined)

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The pastor's Spiritual Priority

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order

the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had

appointed thee" ( - Titus 1:5 - Titus 1:5}).

(I know God put me here, but I wonder if He remembers where He put

me?)

(Rejoice is a Choice)

To rejoice is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Choice)

Spiritual success is a series of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (right

choices)

Failure is succeeding at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Wrong

Thing)

I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Praying) is more important than preaching.

(We think that we don't need to pray. Prayerlessness is a sin but

pride is a greater sin.)

II. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Preaching ) is more important than

administration.

3 Keys to Effective Administration: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( evaluate, eliminate and delegate \*\*\*)

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III. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( family ) is more important than the

congregation.

(You can get another pastor, I can't have another wife.)

IV. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( faithfulness ) is more important than

success. (16:40)

(We are in a pilgrimage, not in a race.)

V. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Love ) is more important than ability.

(Discover, develop, deploy our gifts)

( - 1 Cor 13 - 1 Corinthians 13})

(Steven Covey ‑ Big rocks go in first.)

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04 The Pastor As Elder

Session IVpart one

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The Pastor's Marital Fidelity

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful

children not accused of riot or

unruly" ( - Titus 1:6 KJV) - Titus 1:6 KJV}.

Be a one woman man.

"The ministry that does not begin \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( at home ) does

not begin."

Learn the principle of spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( Equality )

- Gal 3 - Galatians 3}.28 ‑ male nor female ‑ equality

There are seven secrets to have lasting love and a happy home:

I. Fortify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( Faith)

II. Remember \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( Roles ) Equal with different roles.

1 pe 3.7 Wives/Husbands

Submission is not inferiority

No head = dead. 2 heads = monster

"Headship does not mean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; it means

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ( privilege but responsibility )

"Marriage is two \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who come together with different roles in

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ( ) equals, covenant,

Two equals in a covenant

15:43

III. Cultivate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( contentment )

"To whom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not enough, nothing is enough." ( little

)

‑ Married til DEBT do us part

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IV. Banish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( bitterness )

There are three levels of life:

A. Evil for good \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( hellish )

B. Evil for evil \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( human )

C. Good for evil \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( heavenly )

V. Continue \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( communication )

"Communicate or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_" ( disintegrate )

‑ She wants intimacy ‑ you want approval

A. There are some strong hindrances to good communication:

1. Lack of basic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( skills ) v7 knowledge

2. We are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( self centered )

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( bitterness )

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Distractions )

‑ It was football season so the husband says to the wife, anything to

say before... Football season?

‑ you love FB more than me. Well I love you more than basketball.

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5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Fear, insecurity)

‑ Missing quality prayer time with wife

Man ‑ keep & protect

Women ‑ nurture

"It's easy to get the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ off; but real intimacy is getting

the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ down." ( roof, walls )

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( Busyness )

B. What can we do to improve communication?

1. Husbands need to learn to be more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( sensitive )

2. Deal with your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_‑\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (

self‑centeredness )

‑ do you want to be right? Relationship?

3. Make certain there is nothing you have done wrong that you have not

\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( put right )

4. Put \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ back into your marriage. ( fun )

5. Make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to communicate. ( plans )

Make conversations a priority.

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Everyone needs to make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: ( four dates )

A date with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( God )

A date with your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( kids )

A date with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( yourself )

A date with your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( mate )

VI. Refresh \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( romance )

VII. Continue \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( courtship )

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/mMarriage

/sThe Pastor's Marital Fidelity

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Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mPastors

/sThe Pastor's Parental Respons

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Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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The Pastor's Parental Responsibility

What do your kids need? They need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (

leadership )

1. Be an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( example )

Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( firm )

Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( fun )

‑ never flirt w/ another woman & never stop FLIRTING w/ your wife

Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( fair )

2. Have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (family worship)

3. Make certain that your children are in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (house of God)

4. Lash them to the throne of God in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (prayer)

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The Pastor As Elder

Session V

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mParents

/sThe Pastor's Parental Respons

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Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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The Pastor's Parental Responsibility

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Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( firm )

Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( fun )

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Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( fair )

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3. Make certain that your children are in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_

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Session V

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

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/sThe Pastor's Sexual Purity

/i

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The Pastor's Sexual Purity

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even

as himself"

( - Ephesians 5:33 KJV) - Ephesians 5:33 KJV}.

Here are six ways to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

(avoid sexual sin)

I. Walk in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Spirit)

II. Cultivate your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (own marriage)

III. Make your marriage a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (priority)

You can get another pastor but I can't have another wife.

IV. Make no provision for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (flesh)

‑legitimate desire in an illegitimate way

‑ Big at church/job small at home ‑ immature ‑ Some are big in other

places, but not at home.

‑ Flee lust ‑ don't fight it

- 2 Timothy 2:22 (KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:22 KJV} Flee also

youthful lusts: but follow righteousness...

Flee ‑ G5343, pheugo, fyoo'‑go, to run away. RUN!

Follow ‑ G1377 ‑ dioko, dee‑o'‑ko, (like to flee but), to pursue,

follow after, be given to, press toward.

‑ Porn ‑ not victimless sin ‑ yes ‑ you ‑ some fathers daughter

Temptation is often:

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opportunity (unexpected)

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weakness (undetected)

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ life (unprotected) (17 mins)

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V. Pray intimately with your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and not with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(wife, other women)

‑ Joseph ‑ fled ‑ not fought the feeling

‑ Emotional adultery (prayer partner) 25min (Enmeshment.)

VI. Consider the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of moral failure. (consequences)

07 Q&A

‑ - Proverbs 6:33 (KJV) A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

\*\*\* ‑ Can the sin be forgiven? Yes! But the marks may follow you ALL your life.

Benedict Arnold was a ... (Traitor)

Rahab was a ... (Harlot)

Which disciple forsook they Lord? (Peter)

- Mark 14:50 (KJV) - And they all forsook him, and fled.

‑ When a big tree falls ‑ it crushes MANY small trees.

\*\*\* ‑ When can a restored minister be used again?

A‑ when his repentance is as (notorious) well known as his sin.

(Charles Spurgeon)

He may not have the same job.

\*\*\* Forgiveness is given. Trust is EARNED.

Story, man who received a note with ALL of his sins listed. He stood

and read this saying, "I'm ashamed of my sin but not my savior." (HEC

‑ Put it in the light.)

Leaders not only lead but exceeds.

When you serve a church, you need to be willing... to stay the rest

of your life or leave in the next 15 minutes.

Get your heart clean, your motives are clear, then pray ‑ with the

mind of Christ.

Wisdom is sanctified common sense.

What about those who criticize you?

- Matthew 5:11 (KJV) - Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

‑ evil against you falsely ‑ Is it false? If it's true, repent.

- Matthew 5:12 (KJV) - Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Why are you where you are?

Paul ‑ Titus

- Titus 1:5 (KJV) - Titus 1:5 KJV} For this cause left I

thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are

wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Why? - Titus 1:12 (KJV) - Titus 1:12 KJV} One of themselves,

even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil

beasts, slow bellies.

You are there because of the problems. They NEED you there.

Your assignmentmake a list of the consequences to your ministry if

you committed immorality.

Start with these:

My fellowship with God

Unanswered prayer

My relationship with my wife

The respect of my children

My status as a pastor

My influence on others

Loss of self‑respect

The chastisement of God

Public scandal

The ruin of my marriage

The sin against my body

Leading another into sin

The sin against her loved ones

Forfeiting my reward

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The Pastor's Sexual Purity

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(avoid sexual sin)

I. Walk in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Spirit)

II. Cultivate your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (own marriage)

III. Make your marriage a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (priority)

You can get another pastor but I can't have another wife.

IV. Make no provision for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (flesh)

‑legitimate desire in an illegitimate way

‑ Big at church/job small at home ‑ immature ‑ Some are big in other

places, but not at home.

‑ Flee lust ‑ don't fight it

- 2 Timothy 2:22 (KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:22 KJV} Flee also

youthful lusts: but follow righteousness...

Flee ‑ G5343, pheugo, fyoo'‑go, to run away. RUN!

Follow ‑ G1377 ‑ dioko, dee‑o'‑ko, (like to flee but), to pursue,

follow after, be given to, press toward.

‑ Porn ‑ not victimless sin ‑ yes ‑ you ‑ some fathers daughter

Temptation is often:

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opportunity (unexpected)

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weakness (undetected)

An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ life (unprotected) (17 mins)

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V. Pray intimately with your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and not with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(wife, other women)

‑ Joseph ‑ fled ‑ not fought the feeling

‑ Emotional adultery (prayer partner) 25min (Enmeshment.)

VI. Consider the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of moral failure. (consequences)

07 Q&A

‑ - Proverbs 6:33 (KJV) - Proverbs 6:33 KJV} A wound and

dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

\*\*\* ‑ Can the sin be forgiven? Yes! But the marks may follow you ALL your life.

Benedict Arnold was a ... (Traitor)

Rahab was a ... (Harlot)

Which disciple forsook they Lord? (Peter)

- Mark 14:50 (KJV) - Mark 14:50 KJV} And they all forsook

him, and fled.

‑ When a big tree falls ‑ it crushes MANY small trees.

\*\*\* ‑ When can a restored minister be used again?

A‑ when his repentance is as (notorious) well known as his sin.

(Charles Spurgeon)

He may not have the same job.

\*\*\* Forgiveness is given. Trust is EARNED.

Story, man who received a note with ALL of his sins listed. He stood

and read this saying, "I'm ashamed of my sin but not my savior." (HEC

‑ Put it in the light.)

Leaders not only lead but exceeds.

When you serve a church, you need to be willing... to stay the rest

of your life or leave in the next 15 minutes.

Get your heart clean, your motives are clear, then pray ‑ with the

mind of Christ.

Wisdom is sanctified common sense.

What about those who criticize you?

- Matthew 5:11 (KJV) - Matthew 5:11 KJV} Blessed are ye,

when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

‑ evil against you falsely ‑ Is it false? If it's true, repent.

- Matthew 5:12 (KJV) - Matthew 5:12 KJV} Rejoice, and be

exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted

they the prophets which were before you.

Why are you where you are?

Paul ‑ Titus

- Titus 1:5 (KJV) - Titus 1:5 KJV} For this cause left I

thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are

wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Why? - Titus 1:12 (KJV) - Titus 1:12 KJV} One of themselves,

even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil

beasts, slow bellies.

You are there because of the problems. They NEED you there.

Your assignmentmake a list of the consequences to your ministry if

you committed immorality.

Start with these:

My fellowship with God

Unanswered prayer

My relationship with my wife

The respect of my children

My status as a pastor

My influence on others

Loss of self‑respect

The chastisement of God

Public scandal

The ruin of my marriage

The sin against my body

Leading another into sin

The sin against her loved ones

Forfeiting my reward

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session vNotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mSermons

/sThe Sermon's Exposition

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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The Sermon's Exposition

KEY ‑ The Pastor As Shepherd:

Session VI: guards, guides, grows, pulpit, convicts, corrects,

constructs, confidence, consistency, courage, content.

Session VII: Topical, Textual, Expository, introduction, exposition,

conclusion, proposition, sermon, text, Word, experience, passage,

theme, pertinent, value, fear, life, positive, receives, practical,

needs, pointed, inform, transform, knowledge, lives, provocative,

plain, simple, persuasive, material, lesson, commandment, sin,

blessing, truth, topics, texts, quotations, illustrations, outline,

conclusion, application, introduce, notes, manuscript

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight

thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but

of a ready mind;" ( - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV) - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV}.

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guards)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guides)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (grows)

"It is not your job to fill the pew; it is your job to fill the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (pulpit)

‑ If sheep are hungry, they will "BITE" each other.

- Acts 6:3 (KJV) - Acts 6:3 KJV} Wherefore, brethren, look

ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost

and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

This business ‑ feeding widows.

Deacons are the "The Business" managers.

- Acts 6:4 (KJV) - Acts 6:4 KJV} But we will give ourselves

continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

We ‑ shepherds.

Expository preaching is MORE than just explaining.

\*\*\* Exposition is explanation, argumentation, illustration, application and motivation. AR/vol8

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" 2 Timothy 4:2 KJV.

1. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Reproves." (convicts)

‑ The more exposition ‑ The less counseling.

2. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Rebukes." (corrects)

‑ Preach plain. Stand behind the Word of God. (Billy Graham ‑ Donald

Whitley)

‑ Instant in season out of season

Take opportunities & MAKE opportunities

\*\*\* in season ‑ scheduled ministry opportunities.

\*\*\* out of season ‑ UNSCHEDULED ‑ open doors/ windows

‑ If someone drops a handkerchief & says preach ‑ you should be on

the second point before it hits the ground. :)

3. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Exhort with all longsuffering and

doctrine." (constructs)

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I. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(confidence)

II. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(consistency)

‑ No rut preaching. Preach the WHOLE counsel of God.

‑ An 85yr old pastor said, "I have only pastured three churches and I

stayed with them all until they died. :)

‑ Don't Have a Missionary Sermon ‑ That's when it departs & 1goes

EVERYWHERE :)

III. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(courage)

‑ A friend asked, "Where you preaching to me?" I responded, "I was

shooting down in a hole ‑ if you were in it ‑ then that's why you were

hit."

IV. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(content)

‑ You don't have wonder what you will preach.

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Session VII

07. The Sermon's Preparation

Vol8. ‑

‑ Verse by verse is dull & deadly. It turns the pulpit into a

classroom. Expository is finding a truth. The Bible means what it

means. No hunting. One meaning with 10,000 applications. Find a theme

‑ preaching is not filling a bucket. But lighting a torch.

‑ In my humble but ACCURATE opinion . :)

‑ When do you go too long? Preaching John for seven years is too

long. You will lose your people. You can drown a cat in cream.

‑ Gospel John ‑ how to be saved

‑ 1 John ‑ how you know you are saved

‑ What's over your head is under Jesus' feet. :)

End of 09

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"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not

to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ( - 2 Tim.

2:15 KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV}.

There are three major classifications of sermons:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Topical)

‑ During President Clinton's service, I preached, Does Character

Count?

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Textual)

3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Expository)

‑ A paragraph or more. Chapter/book

Every sermon should have the following parts.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them what you're going to tell

them. (introduction)

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (or explanation) Tell them. (exposition)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them you told them. (conclusion)

‑ Tell them what you are going to say . Say it . Tell them what you

said.

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Every sermon should have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (proposition)

If you don't have a proposition, you do not have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

(sermon)

‑ A sermon in a sentence

‑ This is where I'm aiming

This is what I use:

‑ Hey You ‑ Look ‑ Do

Hey You ‑ Introduction

Look ‑ Exposition

Do ‑ Action

The Principles of Sermon Preparation:

I. Choose the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (text)

A good expositor should be aware of two books:

Number one is the book of God's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Word), and the other is the

book of human

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (experience)

15min

‑ A teacher complained to a coach, we have a student that made 4‑Fs &

a D. The Coach said, "It sounds like he's giving too much attention to

one subject."

‑ Be balanced

II. Analyze the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (passage)

‑ There are seams in coconuts. If you know about them, you can open a

coconut easily. The Bible has seams.

Use your tools:

Word studies

‑ Greek 21mins ... Dumb preacher ‑ repent ‑ move back in the

penthouse.

Commentaries

... John Phillips ‑ great

Sermons (Transcripts of sermons of many preachers, including Adrian

Rogers, can be found at www.sermonsearch.com)

... Stand under whales with pales.

... If I want to learn baseball ‑ study baseball players. Don't

steroids ‑ some preachers need steroids.

Bible Atlas

Concordance

III. Prayerfully select a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the passage. (theme)

... 7 points of a sermons don't say 7 things ‑ it says 1 thing 7

ways.

... 27min

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pertinent)

What? So What? Now What?

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How to get attention. Preach about:

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (value)

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fear)

Things that affect your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (life)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (positive)

"Man is not saved by what he gives up, but by what he

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (receives)

3. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (practical)

"Preach to meet \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (needs)

4. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pointed)

"Good preaching is not just to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is to

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (inform, transform)

"The Bible was not given to increase our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but to

change our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ‑ D. L. Moody (knowledge, lives)

5. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (provocative)

6. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (plain)

- 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 1 Corinthians 13:1} (REWORKED) Though

I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not CLARITY, I

am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

:)

"You really don't understand something unless you can communicate it

in

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ way." ‑ Albert Einstein (simple)

7. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( persuasive)

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IV. Gather your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (material)

Ask The Discovery Questions:

Who

When

What

Why

Wherefore

Is there....

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to learn? (lesson)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to obey? (commandment)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to avoid? (sin)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy? (blessing)

a new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to carry with me? (truth)

File things by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

and by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(topics, texts, quotations, illustrations)

If quote

‑Quote source

‑ Old man who went to church, he was well read. The preacher was also

well read and would like to use quotes but never gave the source. As

the preacher would preach, the old man would shout: Swindoll.

Spurgeon. The Preacher shouted, "Shut up fool." Old man said,

That was his own." :)

V. Rework your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and polish it. (outline)

Put verbs in your outline.

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VI. Write your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in that

order. (conclusion, application)

‑ What do you want them to do? Know? etc.

‑ Start the sermon with a question:

What is greater than God... more evil than the devil... the poor

have it... the rich need it... and if you eat it you will die?

Answer: NOTHING

\webpage{http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\_is\_greater\_than\_God...\_more\_evi

l\_than\_the\_devil...\_the\_poor\_have\_it...\_the\_rich\_need\_it...\_and\_if\_you\_

eat\_it\_you\_will\_die#ixzz1XztlSsT7

What's more powerful than God? More evil than devil? If you eat it ‑

you'll die?

VII. You are ready to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your sermon. (introduce)

There are three kinds of sermons:

1. Those you can listen to.

2. Those you can't listen to.

3. Those you must listen to.

Make yours a "must listen to" sermon.

VIII. Make full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or a full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (notes,

manuscript)

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Prodigal Son ‑ bad alliteration Fodder fragments frustrated fled

fathers feet

Melody in F

(The Prodigal Son)

(author unknown)

Feeling footloose and frisky,

a featherbrained fellow

Forced his fond father to fork

over the farthings.

And flew far to foreign fields

And frittered his fortune

feasting

Fabulously with faithless

friends.

Fleeced by his fellows in

folly, and facing

Famine, he found himself a

feed‑flinger in a

Filthy farm yard.

Fairly famished, he fain

would have filled

His frame with foraged food

from fodder

Fragments.

"Fooey, my father's flunkies fare far finer,"

The frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled,

frankly

Facing facts. Frustrated by failure, and filled

with foreboding,

He fled forthwith to his family.

Falling at his father's feet, he forlornly

fumbled,

"Father, I've flunked, and fruitlessly forfeited

Family fellowship & favor."

The far‑sighted father, forestalling

Further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to

Fetch a fatling from the flock

and fix a feast.

The fugitive's fault‑finding

brother frowned on fickle

forgiveness of former

folderol.

But the faithful father figured,

"Filial fidelity is fine, but the

fugitive is found! What

forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled!

Let fanfares flare!"

Father's forgiveness formed

the foundation for the

former fugitive's future

fortitude!

\webpage{http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository‑luke‑15‑11‑32.htm

\webpage{http://gbcdecatur.org/sermons/PityParty.html

‑ Weakest ink better than strongest memory.

Session VIINotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor 2

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Session VIII

Sample Sermons

Discipleship

‑ worship at any cost ‑ hate father/mother

‑ work at any cost ‑

‑ war at any cost ‑ not cowards ‑ compromise

‑ witness at any cost ‑

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‑ Using Notes ‑ Preacher was preaching, a page fell out of his Bible

and he repeated a few times, "Adam said to Eve.... (page missing)

there's a leaf missing." :)

‑ Do the Introduction ‑ one of the last things you do.

Vol 12/4mins

\*\*\* ‑ Salvation Is Free ‑ Discipleship Costs

08. The Sermon's Illustration

KEY ‑ Session VIII: house, windows, known, unknown, literally

illustrate, punctuate, motivate, skyscraper, mindbender, sleep

inducer, Plan, alive, alert, Read, enlightenment, enjoyment,

enrichment, devotional, doctrinal, practical, enablement, ears, eyes,

cathedrals, leadership, creative, logical, heat, light, different,

ideas, imagination, solutions, creative, your own ideas, unusual,

words, write, people, authors

"The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of

fools" ( - Proverbs 26:7 KJV) - Proverbs 26:7 KJV}.

The sermon is the\_\_\_ (house), and the illustrations are the \_\_

(windows) that let the light in.

Jesus, the master teacher, moved his audience from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to

the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (known, unknown)

1:30

‑ Jesus found MANY illustrations in the world around Him. Farmer,

seeds, ground, fisherman, net, sea.

‑ Jesus took what they "knew" ‑ fisherman ‑ and then brought them to

the "unknown" ‑ net/everything

‑ Paul used illustrations about boxing, running a race. He was a

sportsman.

I. There are various kinds of illustrations:

1. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (literally

illustrate)

‑ sower & sees

‑ Lester Rolloff tells the story of Dr Law & Dr Grace

Eyes ‑ looking at bad things

Hands ‑ do evil

Feet ‑ go bad places

Dr law says you need a new heart.

Dr Grace put a new heart in me. Now eyes, feet & hand now do

different.

2. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (punctuate)

‑ humor (8min)

‑ you are not a comedian. It becomes a distraction.

‑ Humor, let's them up for air.

‑ let it ‑ Relax, Renew, Refresh \*\*\*

‑ Spurgen was criticized for using humor.

He said, "If you knew how much I held back ‑ you'd be proud of me."

See ‑

\webpage{http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/whyseprusehu.html

‑ tickle oyster ‑ open shell ‑ apply the knife

3. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (motivate)

‑ picture woman ear against mans chest

She is listening to her son's heart... in another man's chest. \*\*\* (After a heart transplant.)

II. There are some sermonic dangers that relate to illustrations:

1. The \_\_ (skyscraper) sermonOne story upon another.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‑ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has all walls and no

windows. (mind‑bender)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has walls but they are dull

gray and the windows are dirty. (sleep inducer)

‑ Are you going to church?

Yes ‑ I need the sleep. :)

III. The source and the secret of good illustrations:

1. \_\_ ahead. (Plan)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (alive, alert

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ constantly. (Read)

A. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enlightenment)

B. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enjoyment)

14min

‑ Leaders/readers

‑ In a running stream, if wire is stretched across ‑ it will catch

grass.

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C. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enrichment)

‑ Warren Wierbe ‑ read 30 mins a day on one subject = PhD in 10 yrs

16min

‑ Education is expensive ‑ ignorance will cost more.

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the heart. (devotional)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the mind. (doctrinal)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the will. (practical)

D. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enablement)

17mins

‑ we must upgrade our ministry.

‑ Don't be a book recluse ‑ There are ditches on both sides of the

road.

IV. Develop your creativity.

A. What is creativity?

Turning eyes into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and ears into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ears,

eyes)

Information and communication are not always the same. This is the

danger of computer knowledge. 19:30min

God is the God of creation, and He is an artist. "Good architecture

is not an arrangement of beautiful materials, but a beautiful

arrangement of materials."

Learn to turn rock piles into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (cathedrals)

24mins

Use creativity in your preaching, and in your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(leadership)

B. There is the "right brainleft brain" phenomenon.

The right brain is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ part (musicians, poets,

etc). (creative)

The left brain is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (lawyers, architects, etc).

(logical)

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??? heat, light, ???

C. Here are the ten steps to creativity:

1. Dare to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (different)

2. Play with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ideas)

3. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (imagination)

4 Look for needs that need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (solutions)

5. Keep company with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people. (creative)

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6. Believe in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (your own ideas)

7. Be on the lookout for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (unusual)

8. Learn to love \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (words)

9. Think and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (write)

10. Get acquainted with creative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and creative

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (people, authors)

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Session IX

Vol14

09. The Sermon's Presentation

KEY ‑ Session IX: faultless, dirty, full, touch, task, preach, hear,

fit, fashionable, forceful, fresh, fitting.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:12 KJV).

I. Be morally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (faultless) (Not so much sinless but

blameless.)

‑ Jesus needed anointed HS

‑ Special touch ‑ for special task

"God will not use a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vessel." (dirty)

II. Be spiritually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (full)

‑ We need anointing above all.

‑ Sermons must bounce off of heaven first.

‑ Please God ‑ not to please man. If you are trying to please man, you

will not please God.

‑ I have preached the last sermon people have heard (Columbus, GA and

more.)

‑ Remember the well, you had to prime it, then pump. A man say someone

from a distance, he was pumping like crazy! The water was flowing

freely! When he was close enough to see ‑ it wasn't a man but a wooden

image of a man ‑ the pump was moving him. It was an artesian well. The

Spirit moves us. We do not direct the Spirit.

\*\*\* "The anointing is a special \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for a specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (touch, task)

"You ought to preach as if it were the last sermon you would ever

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or the last

sermon they would ever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (preach, hear)

III. Be physically \_\_\_\_\_\_. (fit)

Learn to eat right and to exercise. People do not tend to follow

flabby preachers.

Get a good night's rest before you preach.

‑ Nap If You Are a Night Time Preacher

Be always freshly bathed and shaved. 14:30min

IV. Be modestly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fashionable)

If you are a leader, look and dress like it.

Invest in clothes.

Don't set styles, but dress in style.

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V. Be visibly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (forceful)

Whenever you are on the platform, stand up straight, be alert, be

alive and walk tall.

Whenever seated on the platform, sit up straight with both feet on the

floor.

Use your whole body to preach.

Learn to use your eyes.

Use your face.

Avoid distracting habits.

VI. Be verbally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fresh)

Learn to use your voice.

Work on your vocabulary and choose your words carefully. Avoid

clichés.

Have someone to help you with grammar and pronunciation.

Make it clear.

32mins

‑ it's kiss‑tomary to cuss the bride :)

VII. Be socially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fitting)

Don't use jokes that fail to edify.

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session IXNotes & thoughts:

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Session X

10. The Sermon's Invitation

KEY ‑ Session X: courageously, clearly, concisely, convincingly,

cooperatively, consistently, creatively, compassionately,

convictionally, celebratively.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess

also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me

before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"

(Matthew 10:3233 KJV).

The Bible is full of examples of the public invitation.

1. Pentecost

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and

to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the

Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and

exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts

2:3840 KJV).

2. Garden of Eden

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art

thou?" ( - Genesis 3:9 KJV) - Genesis 3:9 KJV}.

3. Joshua

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day

whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that

were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in

whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the

LORD" ( - Joshua 24:15 KJV) - Joshua 24:15 KJV}.

4. Elijah on Mt. Carmel

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye

between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal,

then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" ( - 1

Kings 18:21 KJV) - 1 Kings 18:21 KJV}.

The Bible closes with an invitation.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,

Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him

take the water of life freely" ( - Rev. 22:17 KJV) - Revelation

22:17 KJV}.

All preaching should have some kind of invitation or it is not

preaching at all.

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‑ Now it's the call for... Know ‑ Do ‑ Believe

I. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (courageously)

‑ - 2 Corinthians 5:11 (KJV) - 2 Corinthians 5:11 KJV}

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

‑ Believe in what you are saying

- Romans 14:5 - Romans 14:5} ...Let every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind.

‑ Believe they will come. (As you come, not if you come...)

II. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (clearly)

‑ Not sure ‑ sinners? Saints?

‑ no cliche'

9.31min

III. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (concisely)

‑ Do not go on and on.

IV. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (convincingly)

V. Give the invitation \_\_. (cooperatively)

‑ involve the church ‑ encourage them to stay. Thank you for staying.

‑ Call altar workers ministers, not counselors.

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VI. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (consistently)

‑ Always give some way for them to respond.

VII. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (creatively)

‑ Not in a runt

‑ Bow your eyes, close your heads ‑ :)

VIII. Give the invitation \_\_. (compassionately)

IX. Give the invitation\_\_\_\_\_\_. (convictionally)

X. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (celebratively)

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session XNotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mSermons

/sThe Sermon's Exposition

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

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/fN

The Sermon's Exposition

KEY ‑ The Pastor As Shepherd:

Session VI: guards, guides, grows, pulpit, convicts, corrects,

constructs, confidence, consistency, courage, content.

Session VII: Topical, Textual, Expository, introduction, exposition,

conclusion, proposition, sermon, text, Word, experience, passage,

theme, pertinent, value, fear, life, positive, receives, practical,

needs, pointed, inform, transform, knowledge, lives, provocative,

plain, simple, persuasive, material, lesson, commandment, sin,

blessing, truth, topics, texts, quotations, illustrations, outline,

conclusion, application, introduce, notes, manuscript

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight

thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but

of a ready mind;" ( - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV) - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV}.

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guards)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (guides)

The shepherd \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the flock. (grows)

"It is not your job to fill the pew; it is your job to fill the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (pulpit)

‑ If sheep are hungry, they will "BITE" each other.

- Acts 6:3 (KJV) - Acts 6:3 KJV} Wherefore, brethren, look

ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost

and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

This business ‑ feeding widows.

Deacons are the "The Business" managers.

- Acts 6:4 (KJV) - Acts 6:4 KJV} But we will give ourselves

continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

We ‑ shepherds.

Expository preaching is MORE than just explaining.

\*\*\* Exposition is explanation, argumentation, illustration, application and motivation. AR/vol8

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" ( - 2

Tim. 4:2 KJV) - 2 Timothy 4:2 KJV}.

1. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Reproves." (convicts)

‑ The more exposition ‑ The less counseling.

2. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Rebukes." (corrects)

‑ Preach plain. Stand behind the Word of God. (Billy Graham ‑ Donald

Whitley)

‑ Instant in season out of season

Take opportunities & MAKE opportunities

\*\*\* in season ‑ scheduled ministry opportunities.

\*\*\* out of season ‑ UNSCHEDULED ‑ open doors/ windows

‑ If someone drops a handkerchief & says preach ‑ you should be on

the second point before it hits the ground. :)

3. The Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "Exhort with all longsuffering and

doctrine." (constructs)

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I. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(confidence)

II. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(consistency)

‑ No rut preaching. Preach the WHOLE counsel of God.

‑ An 85yr old pastor said, "I have only pastured three churches and I

stayed with them all until they died. :)

‑ Don't Have a Missionary Sermon ‑ That's when it departs & 1goes

EVERYWHERE :)

III. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(courage)

‑ A friend asked, "Where you preaching to me?" I responded, "I was

shooting down in a hole ‑ if you were in it ‑ then that's why you were

hit."

IV. Expository preaching gives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the preacher.

(content)

‑ You don't have wonder what you will preach.

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Session VII

07. The Sermon's Preparation

Vol8. ‑

‑ Verse by verse is dull & deadly. It turns the pulpit into a

classroom. Expository is finding a truth. The Bible means what it

means. No hunting. One meaning with 10,000 applications. Find a theme

‑ preaching is not filling a bucket. But lighting a torch.

‑ In my humble but ACCURATE opinion . :)

‑ When do you go too long? Preaching John for seven years is too

long. You will lose your people. You can drown a cat in cream.

‑ Gospel John ‑ how to be saved

‑ 1 John ‑ how you know you are saved

‑ What's over your head is under Jesus' feet. :)

End of 09

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"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not

to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ( - 2 Tim.

2:15 KJV) - 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV}.

There are three major classifications of sermons:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Topical)

‑ During President Clinton's service, I preached, Does Character

Count?

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Textual)

3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Expository)

‑ A paragraph or more. Chapter/book

Every sermon should have the following parts.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them what you're going to tell

them. (introduction)

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (or explanation) Tell them. (exposition)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tell them you told them. (conclusion)

‑ Tell them what you are going to say . Say it . Tell them what you

said.

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Every sermon should have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (proposition)

If you don't have a proposition, you do not have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

(sermon)

‑ A sermon in a sentence

‑ This is where I'm aiming

This is what I use:

‑ Hey You ‑ Look ‑ Do

Hey You ‑ Introduction

Look ‑ Exposition

Do ‑ Action

The Principles of Sermon Preparation:

I. Choose the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (text)

A good expositor should be aware of two books:

Number one is the book of God's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Word), and the other is the

book of human

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (experience)

15min

‑ A teacher complained to a coach, we have a student that made 4‑Fs &

a D. The Coach said, "It sounds like he's giving too much attention to

one subject."

‑ Be balanced

II. Analyze the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (passage)

‑ There are seams in coconuts. If you know about them, you can open a

coconut easily. The Bible has seams.

Use your tools:

Word studies

‑ Greek 21mins ... Dumb preacher ‑ repent ‑ move back in the

penthouse.

Commentaries

... John Phillips ‑ great

Sermons (Transcripts of sermons of many preachers, including Adrian

Rogers, can be found at www.sermonsearch.com)

... Stand under whales with pales.

... If I want to learn baseball ‑ study baseball players. Don't

steroids ‑ some preachers need steroids.

Bible Atlas

Concordance

III. Prayerfully select a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the passage. (theme)

... 7 points of a sermons don't say 7 things ‑ it says 1 thing 7

ways.

... 27min

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pertinent)

What? So What? Now What?

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How to get attention. Preach about:

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (value)

Things you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fear)

Things that affect your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (life)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (positive)

"Man is not saved by what he gives up, but by what he

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (receives)

3. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (practical)

"Preach to meet \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (needs)

4. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (pointed)

"Good preaching is not just to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is to

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (inform, transform)

"The Bible was not given to increase our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but to

change our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." ‑ D. L. Moody (knowledge, lives)

5. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (provocative)

6. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (plain)

- 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 1 Corinthians 13:1} (REWORKED) Though

I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not CLARITY, I

am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

:)

"You really don't understand something unless you can communicate it

in

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ way." ‑ Albert Einstein (simple)

7. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. ( persuasive)

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IV. Gather your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (material)

Ask The Discovery Questions:

Who

When

What

Why

Wherefore

Is there....

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to learn? (lesson)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to obey? (commandment)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to avoid? (sin)

a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy? (blessing)

a new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to carry with me? (truth)

File things by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

and by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(topics, texts, quotations, illustrations)

If quote

‑Quote source

‑ Old man who went to church, he was well read. The preacher was also

well read and would like to use quotes but never gave the source. As

the preacher would preach, the old man would shout: Swindoll.

Spurgeon. The Preacher shouted, "Shut up fool." Old man said,

That was his own." :)

V. Rework your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and polish it. (outline)

Put verbs in your outline.

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VI. Write your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in that

order. (conclusion, application)

‑ What do you want them to do? Know? etc.

‑ Start the sermon with a question:

What is greater than God... more evil than the devil... the poor

have it... the rich need it... and if you eat it you will die?

Answer: NOTHING

\webpage{http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\_is\_greater\_than\_God...\_more\_evi

l\_than\_the\_devil...\_the\_poor\_have\_it...\_the\_rich\_need\_it...\_and\_if\_you\_

eat\_it\_you\_will\_die#ixzz1XztlSsT7

What's more powerful than God? More evil than devil? If you eat it ‑

you'll die?

VII. You are ready to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your sermon. (introduce)

There are three kinds of sermons:

1. Those you can listen to.

2. Those you can't listen to.

3. Those you must listen to.

Make yours a "must listen to" sermon.

VIII. Make full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or a full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (notes,

manuscript)

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Prodigal Son ‑ bad alliteration Fodder fragments frustrated fled

fathers feet

Melody in F

(The Prodigal Son)

(author unknown)

Feeling footloose and frisky,

a featherbrained fellow

Forced his fond father to fork

over the farthings.

And flew far to foreign fields

And frittered his fortune

feasting

Fabulously with faithless

friends.

Fleeced by his fellows in

folly, and facing

Famine, he found himself a

feed‑flinger in a

Filthy farm yard.

Fairly famished, he fain

would have filled

His frame with foraged food

from fodder

Fragments.

"Fooey, my father's flunkies fare far finer,"

The frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled,

frankly

Facing facts. Frustrated by failure, and filled

with foreboding,

He fled forthwith to his family.

Falling at his father's feet, he forlornly

fumbled,

"Father, I've flunked, and fruitlessly forfeited

Family fellowship & favor."

The far‑sighted father, forestalling

Further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to

Fetch a fatling from the flock

and fix a feast.

The fugitive's fault‑finding

brother frowned on fickle

forgiveness of former

folderol.

But the faithful father figured,

"Filial fidelity is fine, but the

fugitive is found! What

forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled!

Let fanfares flare!"

Father's forgiveness formed

the foundation for the

former fugitive's future

fortitude!

\webpage{http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository‑luke‑15‑11‑32.htm

\webpage{http://gbcdecatur.org/sermons/PityParty.html

‑ Weakest ink better than strongest memory.

Session VIINotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor 2

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Session VIII

Sample Sermons

Discipleship

‑ worship at any cost ‑ hate father/mother

‑ work at any cost ‑

‑ war at any cost ‑ not cowards ‑ compromise

‑ witness at any cost ‑

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‑ Using Notes ‑ Preacher was preaching, a page fell out of his Bible

and he repeated a few times, "Adam said to Eve.... (page missing)

there's a leaf missing." :)

‑ Do the Introduction ‑ one of the last things you do.

Vol 12/4mins

\*\*\* ‑ Salvation is free ‑ discipleship costs

08. The Sermon's Illustration

KEY ‑ Session VIII: house, windows, known, unknown, literally

illustrate, punctuate, motivate, skyscraper, mindbender, sleep

inducer, Plan, alive, alert, Read, enlightenment, enjoyment,

enrichment, devotional, doctrinal, practical, enablement, ears, eyes,

cathedrals, leadership, creative, logical, heat, light, different,

ideas, imagination, solutions, creative, your own ideas, unusual,

words, write, people, authors

"The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of

fools" ( - Proverbs 26:7 KJV) - Proverbs 26:7 KJV}.

The sermon is the\_\_\_ (house), and the illustrations are the \_\_

(windows) that let the light in.

Jesus, the master teacher, moved his audience from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to

the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (known, unknown)

1:30

‑ Jesus found MANY illustrations in the world around Him. Farmer,

seeds, ground, fisherman, net, sea.

‑ Jesus took what they "knew" ‑ fisherman ‑ and then brought them to

the "unknown" ‑ net/everything

‑ Paul used illustrations about boxing, running a race. He was a

sportsman.

I. There are various kinds of illustrations:

1. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (literally

illustrate)

‑ sower & sees

‑ Lester Rolloff tells the story of Dr Law & Dr Grace

Eyes ‑ looking at bad things

Hands ‑ do evil

Feet ‑ go bad places

Dr law says you need a new heart.

Dr Grace put a new heart in me. Now eyes, feet & hand now do

different.

2. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (punctuate)

‑ humor (8min)

‑ you are not a comedian. It becomes a distraction.

‑ Humor, let's them up for air.

‑ let it ‑ Relax, Renew, Refresh \*\*\*

‑ Spurgen was criticized for using humor.

He said, "If you knew how much I held back ‑ you'd be proud of me."

See ‑

\webpage{http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/whyseprusehu.html

‑ tickle oyster ‑ open shell ‑ apply the knife

3. Illustrations that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (motivate)

‑ picture woman ear against mans chest

She is listening to her son's heart... in another man's chest. \*\*\*

II. There are some sermonic dangers that relate to illustrations:

1. The \_\_ (skyscraper) sermonOne story upon another.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‑ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has all walls and no

windows. (mind‑bender)

3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermonIt has walls but they are dull

gray and the windows are dirty. (sleep inducer)

‑ Are you going to church?

Yes ‑ I need the sleep. :)

III. The source and the secret of good illustrations:

1. \_\_ ahead. (Plan)

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (alive, alert

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ constantly. (Read)

A. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enlightenment)

B. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enjoyment)

14min

‑ Leaders/readers

‑ In a running stream, if wire is stretched across ‑ it will catch

grass.

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C. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enrichment)

‑ Warren Wierbe ‑ read 30 mins a day on one subject = PhD in 10 yrs

16min

‑ Education is expensive ‑ ignorance will cost more.

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the heart. (devotional)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the mind. (doctrinal)

Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ books for the will. (practical)

D. Read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (enablement)

17mins

‑ we must upgrade our ministry.

‑ Don't be a book recluse ‑ There are ditches on both sides of the

road.

IV. Develop your creativity.

A. What is creativity?

Turning eyes into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and ears into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ears,

eyes)

Information and communication are not always the same. This is the

danger of computer knowledge. 19:30min

God is the God of creation, and He is an artist. "Good architecture

is not an arrangement of beautiful materials, but a beautiful

arrangement of materials."

Learn to turn rock piles into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (cathedrals)

24mins

Use creativity in your preaching, and in your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(leadership)

B. There is the "right brainleft brain" phenomenon.

The right brain is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ part (musicians, poets,

etc). (creative)

The left brain is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (lawyers, architects, etc).

(logical)

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??? heat, light, ???

C. Here are the ten steps to creativity:

1. Dare to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (different)

2. Play with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ideas)

3. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (imagination)

4 Look for needs that need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (solutions)

5. Keep company with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people. (creative)

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6. Believe in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (your own ideas)

7. Be on the lookout for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (unusual)

8. Learn to love \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (words)

9. Think and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (write)

10. Get acquainted with creative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and creative

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (people, authors)

The Pastor As Shepherd | Ministry That Feeds the Flock

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session VIIINotes & thoughts:

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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The pastor as Shepherd

Session IX

Vol14

09. The Sermon's Presentation

KEY ‑ Session IX: faultless, dirty, full, touch, task, preach, hear,

fit, fashionable, forceful, fresh, fitting.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:12 KJV).

I. Be morally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (faultless) (Not so much sinless but

blameless.)

‑ Jesus needed anointed HS

‑ Special touch ‑ for special task

"God will not use a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vessel." (dirty)

II. Be spiritually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (full)

‑ We need anointing above all.

‑ Sermons must bounce off of heaven first.

‑ Please God ‑ not to please man. If you are trying to please man, you

will not please God.

‑ I have preached the last sermon people have heard (Columbus, GA and

more.)

‑ Remember the well, you had to prime it, then pump. A man say someone

from a distance, he was pumping like crazy! The water was flowing

freely! When he was close enough to see ‑ it wasn't a man but a wooden

image of a man ‑ the pump was moving him. It was an artesian well. The

Spirit moves us. We do not direct the Spirit.

\*\*\* "The anointing is a special \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for a specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (touch, task)

"You ought to preach as if it were the last sermon you would ever

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or the last

sermon they would ever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." (preach, hear)

III. Be physically \_\_\_\_\_\_. (fit)

Learn to eat right and to exercise. People do not tend to follow

flabby preachers.

Get a good night's rest before you preach.

‑ Nap If You Are a Night Time Preacher

Be always freshly bathed and shaved. 14:30min

IV. Be modestly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fashionable)

If you are a leader, look and dress like it.

Invest in clothes.

Don't set styles, but dress in style.

The Pastor As Shepherd | Ministry That Feeds the Flock

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V. Be visibly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (forceful)

Whenever you are on the platform, stand up straight, be alert, be

alive and walk tall.

Whenever seated on the platform, sit up straight with both feet on the

floor.

Use your whole body to preach.

Learn to use your eyes.

Use your face.

Avoid distracting habits.

VI. Be verbally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fresh)

Learn to use your voice.

Work on your vocabulary and choose your words carefully. Avoid

clichés.

Have someone to help you with grammar and pronunciation.

Make it clear.

32mins

‑ it's kiss‑tomary to cuss the bride :)

VII. Be socially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (fitting)

Don't use jokes that fail to edify.

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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session IXNotes & thoughts:

The Pastor As Shepherd | Ministry That Feeds the Flock

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The pastor as Shepherd

Session X

10. The Sermon's Invitation

KEY ‑ Session X: courageously, clearly, concisely, convincingly,

cooperatively, consistently, creatively, compassionately,

convictionally, celebratively.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess

also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me

before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"

(Matthew 10:3233 KJV).

The Bible is full of examples of the public invitation.

1. Pentecost

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and

to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the

Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and

exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts

2:3840 KJV).

2. Garden of Eden

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art

thou?" ( - Genesis 3:9 KJV) - Genesis 3:9 KJV}.

3. Joshua

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day

whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that

were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in

whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the

LORD" ( - Joshua 24:15 KJV) - Joshua 24:15 KJV}.

4. Elijah on Mt. Carmel

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye

between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal,

then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" ( - 1

Kings 18:21 KJV) - 1 Kings 18:21 KJV}.

The Bible closes with an invitation.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,

Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him

take the water of life freely" ( - Rev. 22:17 KJV) - Revelation

22:17 KJV}.

All preaching should have some kind of invitation or it is not

preaching at all.

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

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‑ Now it's the call for... Know ‑ Do ‑ Believe

I. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (courageously)

‑ - 2 Corinthians 5:11 (KJV) - 2 Corinthians 5:11 KJV}

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

‑ Believe in what you are saying

- Romans 14:5 - Romans 14:5} ...Let every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind.

‑ Believe they will come. (As you come, not if you come...)

II. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (clearly)

‑ Not sure ‑ sinners? Saints?

‑ no cliche'

9.31min

III. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (concisely)

‑ Do not go on and on.

IV. Give the invitation \_\_\_. (convincingly)

V. Give the invitation \_\_. (cooperatively)

‑ involve the church ‑ encourage them to stay. Thank you for staying.

‑ Call altar workers ministers, not counselors.

The Pastor As Shepherd | Ministry That Feeds the Flock

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VI. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (consistently)

‑ Always give some way for them to respond.

VII. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (creatively)

‑ Not in a runt

‑ Bow your eyes, close your heads ‑ :)

VIII. Give the invitation \_\_. (compassionately)

IX. Give the invitation\_\_\_\_\_\_. (convictionally)

X. Give the invitation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (celebratively)

WHAT EVERY PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW WORKBOOK

Page 50

session XNotes & thoughts:

Adrian Rogers ‑ What Every Pastor Should Know

/mHoly Spirit

/sSermon Outpouring of the Holy

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

/t

/fN

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit ‑ Adrian Rogers

- Ephesians 5:17 (KJV) - Ephesians 5:17 KJV} Wherefore be ye

not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with

the Spirit;

1. Obedience

v 18 ...but be filled with the Spirit;

Be Filled (Be Being Filled) 4.28mins

2. Obligations

- Ephesians 5:19 (KJV) - Ephesians 5:19 KJV} Speaking to

yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making

melody in your heart to the Lord;

Making melody

Prison Singer ‑ Behind a Few Bars & Don't Have the Right Key

‑ Worship

‑ Wedded ‑ Wives Obey

Husband Head ‑ 2 Heads Freak ‑ No Head Dead

‑ Work ‑ Singleness of Heart

‑ War ‑ Drop H‑bomb Holy Spirit

3. Opportunity

Redeeming the time

- Eph 5 - Ephesians 5}.18

Sadness is a churches filled but the people are empty

‑ Spirit ‑ Tools Not Toys. For your employment, not enjoy men.

:) ‑ Woman said I'm so glad I took 1st Aid ‑ There was a Crash in

front of my house. Blood ‑ terrible. Had I not had first aid, and knew

to put my Head Between Knees ‑ Keep from Passing out :)

‑

\* Complete Commitment

Be Filled with Not by Spirit

HS ‑ Glorified Jesus

\* Continual Control

3 ‑ Be Filled ‑ Quench Not ‑ Grieve Not

‑ Greater Sin Not Filled W/ HS ‑ than Getting Drunk

‑ Imagine Preaching Drunk

‑ Imagine Preaching W/O HS

Prob ‑ Not Responsible for What Is Said

\* Continuos Claiming

‑ Anointing ‑ Special Touch for Specific Task

ILL ‑ Coat ‑ Raise Arms ‑ Lift Bible ‑ I must Fill it to Work!!!!

RESULTS

Look at the Particles. ‑ words ending in "ING"

Speaking Singing Making Melody

V20 Giving Thanks

‑ HS

V21 Submitting ‑ Submission

/mDevotion

/sAdrian Rogers Private Prayer

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

/t

/fN

Adrian Rogers Bonus Sermons

HEC ‑ Phoenix AZ September 19, 2011

My private prayer time

Ill ‑ wood pecker in S. GA ‑ LIGHTENING split tree ‑ called others "

look what I've done"

‑ I'd Rather Be a Preacher than Have a Paying Job! :)

\* Integrity

‑ Nothing to Fear & Nothing to Hide

‑‑ Moral Integrity

‑ When younger ‑ If You Become What You Think ‑ I Was Afraid I Was

Going to Become a Woman

‑ Don't Flirt with Women ‑ Never Stop Flirting with Wife 23mins

DO NOT

‑ Preach Don't Practice

‑ Don't Pray What Do Not Mean

‑ Pretend What I Do Not Do \*\*\*

‑‑ Doctrinal Integrity

- Galatians 1:10 (KJV) - Galatians 1:10 KJV} For do I now

persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased

men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

- Gal 1 - Galatians 1}.10 Please God

I Tell Jesus What I'm Preaching ‑ If it Doesn't Please Jesus ‑ Not

Worth Preaching

‑ It's like being 1st Class on the Titanic. People going to hell but

feeling better about themselves.

‑‑ You Can't Make the Gospel Pleasing to the Flesh ‑ We Don't Make it Enticing We Make it Available \*\*\*

‑ PACE your devotion

Praise

Accept ‑ for Me ‑ to Me Use me God

Control ‑ Hands up ‑ Give up

Expectation ‑ Great Day

‑ Walk 3 Miles

Pray Children Each Day ‑ Then 1 Day Each Week

MX

SA

Africa

Europe

Far East

Usa

(Do 7 Presbyters)

/mLeaders

/sAdrian Rogers ‑ LEADERSHIP

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

/t

/fN

Adrian Rogers ‑ LEADERSHIP

Adrian Rogers Bonus Sermons

HEC ‑ Phoenix AZ ‑ September 19, 2011

LEADERSHIP ‑ Chief Shepherd

Elder ‑ maturity

Shepherd ‑ ministry ‑ Feed

Oversight ‑ management

Maturity

Ministry

Management

I Maturity

Haddon Robinson ‑

The modern preacher ‑ superman house calls shake hand lesson

psychologist president banker diplomat umpire NAACP ‑ KKK

‑ Bull Train

Each day, train go by, blow horn, disturb bulls rest. Had enough.

Broke through fence ‑ head on with train ‑ and the conductor was

cleaning what was left of the bull our the cow catcher, he said, "I

admire your courage but your judgement was mighty poor."

Mature

‑ experience ‑ witness suffering ‑ glimpse glory

Don't preach beyond your experience

Preaching my sermons ‑ Use my bullets ‑ but use your powder

Glowing enthusiasm‑ not filthy lucre

Dirty bills ‑ no germs could live on my salary

Double honor ‑ honorarium

‑ willing mind. 19mins

‑ preaching is not making a living ‑ it's how we live our life for Him

in HIS SERVICE. (Preachers should be paid and paid well but that's not

why we do it.)

Godly Example

- 1 Peter 5:3 (KJV) - 1 Peter 5:3 KJV} Neither as being

lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

(NIV) ...being examples to the flock.

I subscribe to pastoral superiority but the congregation cancelled my

subscription.

Job Description

I Ministry

II Ministry

- 1 Peter 5:2 (KJV) - 1 Peter 5:2 KJV} Feed the flock of God

which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint,

but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Feed ‑ G4165, poimaino, poy‑mah'ee‑no, to tend as a shepherd, feed.

1. Guard the flock

- Acts 20:29 (KJV) - Acts 20:29 KJV} For I know this, that

after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not

sparing the flock.

Congregation ‑ Follow & Swallow

Pastor ‑ Leads & Feeds

Guard, Guide & Grow

Sheep produce sheep

III Management

Bishop ‑ overseer

Ministry ‑ Management

- Acts 20:28 (KJV) - Acts 20:28 KJV} Take heed therefore

unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost

hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath

purchased with his own blood.

Humble but accurate opion

Pastor Led

Deacon Served

Doesn't run the church

Committee Operated

Commitment

Congregation Approved

I serve at the pleasure of our people (like the president)

\*\*\*

Pastors

Adrian Rogers ‑ LEADERSHIP

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

Adrian Rogers ‑ LEADERSHIP

Adrian Rogers Bonus Sermons

HEC ‑ Phoenix AZ ‑ September 19, 2011

LEADERSHIP ‑ Chief Shepherd

Elder ‑ maturity

Shepherd ‑ ministry ‑ Feed

Oversight ‑ management

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Doesn't run the church

Committee Operated

Commitment

Congregation Approved

I serve at the pleasure of our people (like the president)

\*\*\*

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Making the Move to Noteless Preaching - Peter Mead

- 9/2011.101

Making the Move to Noteless Preaching

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net Cor Deo

Remember, the goal of sermon preparation is an oral message, not a

polished manuscript for publication.Email this articlePrint

FriendlyHow is it possible to move from manuscript to notes or even no

notes? A few thoughts:

1. Manuscripting is a great approach to sermon preparation that I

affirm. The issue is not writing a manuscript, but relying on it or

reading it in the pulpit. Work put in on wording and phrasing in

preparation will yield fruit in preaching, so it is worth continuing

to manuscript, in my opinion.

2. Moving to notes means formulating a distillation on paper. That

is, putting in something similar to headings and sub‑headings in your

manuscript, then removing the text to leave these headings and

highlights of content. I dont like to use the term headings because

actually a sermon outline is not built with headings, it is made up of

ideas. The problem with headings is that they tend to be incomplete

sentences, and therefore, incomplete thoughts. If we take the heading

approach we will be tempted into clever little pithy alliterations and

summary headings that actually dont reflect the content of the

message. Much better to summarize the movement of the message and

preach with those ideas rather than alliterated bullet points.

(That is not to say that you might not be able to use trigger terms to

jog your memory of the ideas that constitute the points or movements

of the message, but these are triggers for you, not your listeners.)

3. Moving to no notes means a bit more of a step. With notes you can

still have a complex message that bounces around the canon like a hard

rubber ball in a concrete box. When you go no notes, you need to

simplify the message and tie it in more closely to the text you are

preaching. Effectively the text becomes your notes, so you look at

the text and see the shape of thought that provides the skeleton for

the message. No notes preaching doesnt require superior memory

skills, it requires only greater familiarization with the text and a

more accessible / clear / logical / simple message. If a message is

so complex that you need notes to help you navigate it, then what hope

do your listeners have? Youve spent hours on it; they only get one

shot!

4. Moving to notes or no notes requires practice. I dont mean just

trying and failing in the pulpit (in reality you wont fail as

easily as you expect). What I mean is running through the message

without the manuscript. Prayerfully practicing before you preach is

not at all unspiritual. I would encourage preachers to preach...often

a message makes sense on paper, but simply wont flow from your

mouth. Better to find that out before you preach it on Sunday!

Remember, the goal of sermon preparation is an oral communication

event, not a polished manuscript for publication.

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.netCor Deo

Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

church in the UK. He serves as director of Cor Deoan innovative

mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/peter‑

mead‑making‑the‑move‑to‑noteless‑preaching‑1021.asp?utm\_source=newslett

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10 Tips for Better Preaching - Jim Martin

- 9/2011.101

10 Tips for Better Preaching Pt.1

Jim Martin

Godhungry.org

In this two‑part series on better preaching, Jim Martin offers ten

tips for more effective preaching every Sunday. Email this

articlePrint FriendlyThe following are ten suggestions that can make a

significant difference in preaching. As I write these, I have in mind

in particular those preachers/teachers who address the same

congregation of people every week.

1. Communicate to the people in your church that you love them.

You do this through your words, manner, and tone of voice. After all,

these people are not a platform to be used to launch you toward

something bigger and better. They are a precious local expression of

the body of Christ. If they think you really don't love them, what you

say in a sermon will be greatly discounted.

2. Seek clarity not obscurity in preaching.

No, not all of the fruit must be low hanging. People need to hear a

word from God. Many people come to church after a week of just trying

to survive. Some preachers might be stunned if they were to see a

composite list of all the difficulty and turmoil these people

experienced that week.

3. Resist the temptation to trot out every new thought in this

Sunday's sermon.

Some ideas and thoughts need to spend time slowly cooking in the

crockpot rather than being prematurely presented on a Sunday morning.

4. Be careful about regularly communicating that you are different

from the rest of the people in the congregation.

For example, a preacher needs to be careful about belittling a local

favorite, such as a favorite food. This preacher may do this in an

attempt at humor. Such an attempt can easily backfire and can

communicate that you really don't value what they value. A similar

mistake is to regularly talk about how much better things are "back

home" instead of here. Sure it is fine to have your own opinions.

However, one may unnecessarily use up some goodwill with such remarks.

5. Passion alone does not make a sermon.

However, when a preacher rarely preaches with passion, one wonders how

important the message is to that preacher. Passion is not turning red

in the face or yelling at the congregation. Passion is what emerges

from a preacher when there is a strong sense of importance to this

message. When one preaches with passion, one senses the earnestness

and the listener senses that this message is very important. Where

does passion come from? Prayer. Thought. Reflection on God's word.

One's own relationship with God. Passion begins to emerge as you

realize what is at stake in this message.

Jim Martin

Godhungry.orgJim Martin is the lead pastor of Crestview Church of

Christ in Waco, Texas. He's married to Charlotte and has two

daughters. He enjoys coffee, biking, and grilling most anything. Read

more on his blog: Godhungry.org.

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10 Tips for Better Preaching Pt. 2

Jim Martin

Godhungry.org

In this two‑part series on better preaching, Jim Martin offers ten

tips for more effective preaching every Sunday.Email this articlePrint

FriendlyThis is Part 2 of "10 Tips for Better Preaching." Read Part 1

here.

6. Talk to people as if they are intelligent (they are) but resist the

urge to prepare a sermon for a seminary professor.

You are now before the people of the congregation. You are not trying

to impress your professor. You are trying to connect with a group of

people who have a variety of problems and who are engaged in a number

of professions. This doesn't mean that you must "dumb down" your

preaching. It does mean that you need to work hard for clarity.

When I was almost finished with my DMin degree, I received a call one

day from one of my professors. He said he and his wife were going to

be in our assembly the following Sunday. He wanted to hear me preach.

After hearing that he was going to visit, I panicked. I wondered if I

should not toss my sermon into the trash and start over.

Fortunately, I caught myself and realized I was preparing to preach to

one person instead of preaching to the people who would be gathered in

our assembly.

7. Note the importance of ethos.

Your genuiness and goodness are incredibly important. No longer will

people listen simply because you are the preacher and you have been to

seminary. For many people today, your credibility will first come from

your life and godliness.

8. Present the opposing view as if very intelligent, good people

believe this.

In other words, don't make fun of the opposing view or talk as if

those who hold such a view are obviously not intelligent, thoughtful,

or spiritual. When presenting an opposing view, present the strongest

argument for that view, not the weakest. In other words, you may not

agree with the view but you can respect those who happen to hold that

view.

9. If you want people to take you seriously, then do nothing that

might give them reason not to.

Remember that preaching is a matter of trust and credibility.

Preaching that deals with Jesus, sin, suffering, doubt, faith is

deeply personal. Very often your hearers will listen not only with

their ears but in some of the most tender places in their hearts. They

are allowing you, as you handle the Word of God, to speak to their

hearts. They are trusting you to walk gently and to handle the Word of

God as a skillful surgeon. They trust your integrity and authenticity.

(This is one reason why it is devastating for a member of the

congregation to learn that their preacher is committing adultery. They

have given that preacher much trust and it turns out this person has

not been living a trustworthy life.)

10. Take your preaching seriously and yourself less seriously.

Remember that most any preacher can be heard through podcasts or some

sort of digital recording. Don't panic when the congregation starts

quoting a nationally known preacher after listening to his latest

podcast. Be glad they are learning and growing.

When you make mistakes, laugh at yourself. Your laughter will put them

at ease and they will more readily connect with you. Admitting your

mistakes and laughing at yourself will actually help you bond with the

church.

Jim Martin

Godhungry.orgJim Martin is the lead pastor of Crestview Church of

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tm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

/mChurch Planting

/s12 Qs Before Planting a Churc

/i

Date Originally Filed - 9/2011.101

/t

/fN

12 Qs Before Planting a Church?

Should You Plant a Church? 12 Questions to Confirm Your Calling

Mark Driscoll

Acts 29 Network

Mark Driscoll offers a bold and helpful list of questions to help

leaders confirm their call to plant.Email this articlePrint Friendly1.

Is the Holy Spirit out ahead of you planting the church? You don't

plant a church for God; you plant a church with God. If money, people,

and a place start showing up as you're preparing to plant, that is

potential evidence that the Holy Spirit is out ahead of you

( - Acts 1 - Acts 1}).

2. Is your church planting call obvious to other godly leaders?

3. Has God confirmed your church plant by showing up in miraculous

(big, supernatural, no‑other‑way‑to‑explain‑it) ways? In

- Acts 3 - Acts 3} and - 4 - Acts 4}, Peter heals a

man, preaches, and then thousands of people get saved.

4. Are you reaching lost people? The goal of church plants is the

salvation of lost people. If you're not doing this, don't plant a

church. If you want to be a shepherd, there are plenty of existing

flocks in need. (Acts 8:59)

5. Has Jesus shown up and told you to plant? ( - Acts 9 - Acts

9})

6. Has God told you to plant through a vision? In - Acts

10 - Acts 10} and - 11 - Acts 11}, Cornelius and Peter both

have a vision: Peter is called and Cornelius welcomes him.

7. Has God providentially relocated you to plant? In Acts 11:1921,

believers scatter due to persecution and plant a church where they

resettle.

8. Is God calling you to plant because you're not totally necessary at

your current church? If you're in a church with good leaders that will

be fine without you on their team, God may be calling you to relocate

to a place where you can use your gifts and resources to their full

capacity. ( - Acts 13 - Acts 13})

9. Is God calling you to plant because you're currently wasting your

time in a toxic place? ( - Acts 14 - Acts 14})

10. Are you called to be a catalytic church planter or to plant a

church‑planting center? In - Acts 14 - Acts 14}, Paul goes

from one city to the next planting churches and then sends in other

men to establish elders, whereas James (Jesus' brother) plants a

church in Jerusalem and stays there, sending other men out.

11. Has God called you to plant by giving you a deep burden for a city

or people? ( - Acts 17:16 - Acts 17:16})

12. Has God called you to plant by giving you a core group?

( - Acts 18:7‑8 - Acts 18:7‑8})

Mark Driscoll

Acts 29 NetworkPastor Mark Driscoll is the Preaching and Speaking

pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle. He is one of the world's most

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alikespans the theological and cultural left and right. Follow his

updates at twitter.com/pastorMark.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/mark‑d

riscoll‑should‑you‑plant‑a‑church‑12‑questions‑to‑confirm‑your‑calling‑

1026.asp

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Dealing with the Preacher‑Eaters - Joe McKeever

- 6/2011.101

Dealing with the Preacher‑Eaters - Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.com

Joe McKeever shares practical advice for dealing with the

self‑appointed church rulers who try to dominate your preaching and

your ministry. Email this articlePrint FriendlyRecently, I cautioned

young assistant pastors on a snare lying in their path (i.e., certain

church members puffing them up into believing that they are superior

to the pastor and ought to have his job). In telling my own story from

several decades back, I expressed gratitude that I had not become the

senior pastor for several reasons. Chief among them was the extremely

strong laymen who exercised great influence in that church who would

have "chewed me up and spat me out."

A young pastor wrote asking me to elaborate on that. Who are those

men? How do they operate? What is a pastor to do when he finds himself

serving a church with such leadership in place?

Nothing that follows is meant to imply that I have all wisdom on this

subject. Far from it. I carry scars from encounters with some of those

mennot men from that church in my previous article, but from their

clones with whom I did battle in two subsequent churches.

The Apostle John wrote to a friend whom he called "beloved Gaius" in

the little epistle we call III John. The key issue is a church boss

who was exercising tyrannical control over the congregation. John

says, "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the

preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I

will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with

malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not

receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out

of the church" (III - John 9‑10 - John 9‑10}).

They've always been with us, these self‑important self‑appointed

church rulers who reign as big frogs in small ponds and get their

thrills from dominating God‑sent ministers.

Who are they?

They are almost always men. I've never seen a woman try to control the

church and the preachers the way some men do. Perhaps you have. Human

nature being what it is, doubtless there are female Diotrephes out

there. Thankfully, they are rare.

Where do they come from?

Ah, there is the rub.

Some of these menlet's call them Sons of Diotrephesare serious

disciples of Jesus Christ who rose to leadership positions in the

church on their merit. They stepped in at difficult times for the

church and provided the wisdom, the direction, and the leadership that

saved the day. The congregation is grateful and now naturally looks to

them for direction long after the crisis is over.

When a new pastor arrives at a church, he will want to identify the

influence‑makers. Whether they hold elective offices or not, these are

the men and women to whom the congregation naturally (and first!)

looks when critical decisions must be made. If they oppose a program

the new preacher is presenting, he's in trouble from the start. He

does well to get to know these people and to keep them on his side.

Some Sons‑of‑Diotrephes are not serious disciples of Jesus but simply

stepped in and filled a leadership vacuum at a crisis period in the

church's life and now refuse to vacate it. They enjoy being

power‑brokers. Such people are the bane of every pastor and the death

knell for every church unless the congregation acts to break their

stranglehold.

Sometimes carnal men are assigned church leadership roles by merit of

their wealth or position in the community. In a small to medium‑size

church made up of typical Americans, the owner of a factory or large

business will always stand out. The deference which he commands during

the week will be shown him on Sunday. If he is regular in attendance

and generous with his money, he's almost automatically going to be

elected to key positions. Whether he is godly and humbleSpirit‑filled

and mission‑minded, with a servant spirit and a heart for Godor not,

rarely comes into play in the typical church.

How sad is that?

Pity the new pastor who walks into a church unprepared to deal with

carnal leaders who enjoy their power positions and cannot wait to let

the new minister know who's in charge.

Dealing with the Sons of Diotrephes

In the church where I served as a staff member (referred to in the

previous article), the strongest lay leaders, the ones who ruled and

insisted that the pastor deal with them, were a handful of business

leaders in the city. Some were related to one another. To me

personally, they were sweet and friendly and a pleasure to fellowship

with. However, I was a lowly staffer and hardly a blip on their radar.

It was the pastor who was in their cross‑hairs.

Quick story. A new pastor arrived and quickly ran into the reality of

this small cadre of Diotrephes‑clones (the SODs). After a few

difficult years, the weary pastor bailed out and relocated to another

state. Some years later, when the pastor who succeeded him got into

moral trouble and had to resign abruptly, the pastor search committee

wanted the former pastor to return. They were surprised by his

response.

"Before I agree to talk with your committee," he said, "I want Mr.

Diotrephes (he named him, of course) to fly out here and ask me

personally to become the pastor. If he doesn't, I'm not interested."

When Diotrephes showed up at the pastor's office, hat in hand, asking

him to return, the pastor let him know that if he came back to that

church, things would be different. Otherwise, no soap. He returned and

led that congregation through many years of ministry and growth. To my

knowledge, his influence and leadership and authority as pastor were

never seriously threatened thereafter.

I've never forgotten that lesson. Unfortunately, his was an unusual

situation, not easily duplicated by other pastors.

Question: How would a pastor deal with the Sons of Diotrephes in the

new church where he has gone to serve? Very carefully. Extremely

prayerfully.

A wise pastor will find out before he goes to a church how decisions

are made there and whether unelected, self‑appointed laypeople call

the shots. A little investigating (such as talking with the previous

pastors or the local denominational leadership) will tell him whether

he wants to proceed further with the pastor search committee.

The former pastor made no bones about it with me. "Joe," the older

gentleman said, as he put his long arms around my shoulder, "twenty of

the most miserable years of my life were spent in that church."

That is exactly what he said.

"A little group was organized against me. They fought me on every

decision. Whenever they got word that we were going to be presenting

anything for a church vote, they burned up the phone lines organizing

their people to oppose it."

And yet, I still went to that church. I went in knowing that I could

expect opposition from a small, powerful group of members. Sure

enough, they were on the job. As we've written elsewhere, I found out

later that some decided I was too conservative for their liking and

decided before the moving van was unloaded that I would have to go.

Instead of staying 20 years as I intended, I stayed three.

In our case, we called in a church consultant. He spent many weeks

studying our situation and faulted the church for having no

constitution and bylaws which left a leadership vacuum to be filled by

strong‑willed laypeople. He found that while I was not responsible for

the church's division, I had become its focus and recommended that I

move to another church so the congregation could create a constitution

and start fresh with a new pastor.

It hurt to walk away. But I realized later that doing so probably

saved my life. The stress of that pastorate was slowly killing me.

Something inside us probably would like God to deal with the SODs the

way he protected Moses against them. From - Numbers

16 - Numbers 16}....

Now, Korah the son of Izhar (and a number of his buddies) rose up

before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and

fifty leaders of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered

together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much

upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them,

and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the

assembly of the Lord?"

When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, and he spoke to Korah and

all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is

His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him.... You

take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

Moses said to them, "You and all your company are gathered together

against the Lord." ( - Numbers 16:11 - Numbers 16:11})

The next day, the ground split apart under (these men). The earth

opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all

the men with Korah, with all their goods.... The earth closed over

them, and they perished from among the assembly.

Wasn't this a little harsh? Well, God did it, not Moses. And God being

God, He can do as He pleases ( - Psalm 115:3 - Psalms 115:3}).

By the way, one day one of the SODs came to me at church and said,

"Joe, does it not matter to you the caliber of the people who are

opposed to you?" At the time, all I muttered was, "It does." Only

later did the Lord call - Numbers 16 - Numbers 16} to my mind

where the "men of renown" opposed Moses.

In Moses' case and in my case, God dealt with those men. Dramatically

in Moses' case, not so much in mine. As far as I can tell. And that's

an important point.

I stood in front of a church I had been serving for seven years and

told the congregation how a small group of SODs were making life

miserable for me. They did not represent the larger membership, I said

and was glad to know, but they were a constant drag on my ministry and

a thorn in my flesh. From the pulpit I addressed that group: I need

you to know two important things: One, God is using your opposition to

purify me and make me stronger. So I am grateful for you. Second, you

will stand before the Lord one day and give account for what you are

doing to His church and the man He has sent as your pastor. And

friend, I wouldn't be in your shoes for anything in the world. I

thought of the line, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of

the living God ( - Hebrews 10:31 - Hebrews 10:31}).

Toward the end of that sermon that day, I told the Diotrephes clan,

"From now on, I'm serving you notice. We will love you, we will listen

to you, and then we're going to ignore you. But we are going forward."

The congregation burst into applause. Some asked later why it had

taken me so long to kill that snake.

The answer was that I was still in recovery from the turmoil in the

previous church (the one referred to above where the older pastor had

spent 20 miserable years, to which I devoted only three years).

Furthermore, it took seven years in this church to gain the confidence

that the congregation looked to me as pastor and would support me in a

stand against the SODs.

Here are my suggestions to the pastor who finds himself in this snake

pit:

1. Spend a great deal of time on your knees.

2. Protect your wife from much of the stress. If she can continue

loving the SODs and their families without reservation, all the

better. She will need to know some, but not everything.

3. Remember the Lord's instructions of - Luke 6:27 - Luke

6:27}ff. In loving your enemies‑‑those who hate you or curse you or

threaten you‑‑you are to do good deeds for them, bless them, pray for

them, and give to them. Among other benefits, you will make sure that

ill will and resentment will not linger in your heart.

4. Minister to the SODs faithfully as though they are your biggest

supporters. Otherwise, you are giving them material to use against

you.

5. As you gain the trust of the rest of the congregation, in God's

timing, you will be able to withstand the SODs more aggressively and

with greater success.

6. Remember that a short‑term pastorate plays right into their hands.

If you leave after only a few years, they are vindicated that their

leadership is needed to save the church during the interim, and they

will be lying in wait for the next pastor. You will have done him no

favors.

7. Vengeance is not yours. (See - Romans 12:9‑21 - Romans

12:9‑21} for a manual on dealing with everyone in the church,

including the Sons of Diotrephes.) Your job is to preach the Word and

love the sheep and stay close to the Lord.

There is one more method, a quick one, that ends the

Sons‑of‑Diotrephes' hold on the church. Other laymen inside the

congregation can rise up against the SODs and put them out of business

anytime they please.

The SODs have the pastor in a hammerlock. This is his job and he needs

an income to feed his family. If he gets run off from this church and

finds himself unemployed, he will find it difficult to get another

church. Pastor search committees are understandably wary of flockless

shepherds. "If you're so hot, why aren't you leading a church?"

However, the SODs have no such control over the other laypeople.

That's why they try to work behind the scenes with the other men and

women in the congregation. They use friendship, gifts, thoughtfulness,

appointments, and honors to curry favor with the deacons and teachers

and officers of the church. The laypeople are so trusting of these

(ahem) wonderful people, they "just know" they couldn't possibly be

doing all those terrible things to the pastor. And so, like sheep,

they go on their way, allowing the wolves to harass the shepherd.

The remedy: in a church business meeting, stand up and ask important

questions. "Who decided this?" "Pastor, was this what you wanted?"

"Who is on that committee?" Two things the SODs cannot stand are

exposure (everyone finding out what they've been doing behind the

scenes) and accountability (insisting that decision‑makers report to

the congregation on what they did and why).

Sons of Diotrephes have contempt for the laity in their congregation.

They know the great mass of the members want to be left alone and

protected from the inner workings of their church. This provides them

with a field on which to do their work. Hold them accountable. Ask

questions of them in public. Turn on the lights. Let fresh air into

the inner workings of what used to be known as smoked‑filled rooms.

You might end up saving your church and rescuing an embattled pastor.

There is no one‑size‑fits‑all plan for dealing with self‑appointed

church bosses. But I hope my analysis provides some assistance to

God's pastors. Don't forget, friend, to mobilize your prayer support

team. In good times and bad, you'll need a cadre of intercessors

regularly entering the Throne Room on your behalf.

Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.comDr. Joe McKeever is a preacher, cartoonist and the

retired Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater

New Orleans. Currently he loves to serve as a speaker/pulpit fill for

revivals, prayer conferences, deacon trainings, leadership banquets

and other church events. Visit him and enjoy his insights on nearly 50

years of ministry at JoeMcKeever.com.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/joe‑mc

keever‑dealing‑with‑the‑preacher‑eaters‑965.asp

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Each Sermon Should Include

- 7/2011.101

Each Sermon Should Include

Each sermon should include: (bullet point the main items and expound

each point).

The classical way to form a sermon is to use an orderly and logical

outline. Even though each sermon should have logic, it should not

always need to be predictable. In order to remain logical and the help

the hearers to keep pace with the sermon the following components

should be included:

The Title. The main function of the title is to serve as an advanced

introduction to the sermon. When the title is read people will begin

to guess what the sermon is about as well as it gives an implied

promise that will be fulfilled during the sermon. The title should not

detract from the sermon but be a quick reference to the content of the

sermon. It is not always necessary to have a title, or at least as

the hearers is concerned, but it aids in proper filing and quick

reference at a later time. I have had instances when I named a sermon

and when I pulled the sermon to preach at another date/place the

emphasis was on a different part of the sermon causing the title to

change and some restructuring of some of the content.

The Introduction. The special responsibilities of the introduction

are:

A sermon introduction should make a promise to the hearer and it

should give hints as what to expect in the heart of the sermon.

It should make a promise that the hearers are likely to want to

keep. It should maintain the hearer's interest and bear meaning to

their lives.

It should remain on the same communicational level as the rest of the

sermon.

It should anticipate the whole sermon, but also unify with the next

step of the sermon.

The Proposition. The proposition is the thesis or the subject of the

sermon." This is the reason the sermon is preached or needed and is to

develop one main truth.

The Divisions. I find and our studies show that having an outline or

divisions will help to know where I have been in the sermon and where

I will need to go. This helps the hearer to keep up with the

progression of the sermon and to have a better understanding of what

comes next. Sometimes these divisions can be formulated into an

acronym which will help the hearer to remember the sermon, such as the

well known FROG‑Fully, Rely, On, God.

The Discussion. The discussion is the body of the sermon that

properly unfolds the ideas contained in the division. The discussion

should contain:

Unity The mixture of thoughts should all come together in the sermon

and not branch off into what some people call "rabbit trails".

Proportion It is best to keep the divisions within proportion with

each other. Expounding on one point more than the others may detract

from the full purpose of the sermon.

Progression There must be a build up or progression of the sermon.

1. Consisting of a foundation or introduction. 2. Frame work or

outline of the sermon. 3. Internal working which consists of word

studies, in depth study of the content of the scripture.

The Illustrations. Although not always necessary illustrations can

bring about great clarity to the sermon. Jesus utilized stories (or

parables) to get his point across to the hearers. Illustrations make

the sermon more interesting and provide a vivid witness and emphasis

to the truth. But it is necessary to use illustrations that are clear

as well as credible. Don't deter from the facts so that the

information that you are sharing is believable. Keeping the

illustration brief will help keep it from overpowering the sermon and

thus taking away from the purpose of the sermon. You do not want

people to only remember the illustration; it should point to the

point/purpose of the message.

The Application. The application is one of the most important

elements of the sermon and should bring into focus the next step or

direction the hearer should continue in their journey with Christ.

The Conclusion. The purpose of the conclusion is reaffirming what the

sermon should have already stated. It should not include points or

ideas that were not part of the body of the sermon. There are several

forms of conclusion such as recapitulation that steps the hearer back

through a brief review of the main points of the sermon. The second

is the illustration that brings together the content into a format

that the hearer can better understand. The third is the appeal or

application that gets the hearer ready to do something or commit to

following through with putting action to Word that has been presented.

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10 Last Minute Preaching Tips by Toni Ridgaway

- 8/2011.101

10 Last Minute Preaching Tips by Toni Ridgaway

ChurchLeaders.com

Read these top ten preaching tips for inspiration and vision before

you preach this Sunday! Email this articlePrint Friendly

As pastors, we must first preach the gospel to ourselves before we

proclaim to the world the necessity of a Savior. How damnable it

would be to die of malnutrition while we busily prepare food for

others.

Scott Thomas

The best advice we ever give is that of a poor sinner to another poor

sinner. As one who looks to herself, lest she also be tempted. As one

who knows he needs to be encouraged as well. As one who doesnt

assume to know anothers heart and pain.

Mark Altrogge

If one wanted to find the biggest problem in Christianity then listen

to the preachers. Whatever most preachers are avoiding in their

sermons. Whatever most preachers are not addressing. Those things are

probably going to be the things that are most needed today.

Sherman Haywood Cox II

Sermons are not made for paper; they are made for people. They are to

be listened to. Just like Ford test‑drives any prototype before they

produce the vehicle, you should test drive your sermon by listening to

it before you preach it.

Mark Mohler

We all know that it is important to know what you are teaching, but it

is becoming even more important to know how they are learning.

Wayne Cordeiro

To help people change, youve got to help them see the lie theyre

basing their behavior on. Thats why when you know the truth, it sets

you free.

Rick Warren

What the world is looking for is an authoritative Gospel spoken

through a humble personality.

P.T. Forsythe

People dont transform because of a good message. They transform

because of a great Jesus.

Pete Wilson

Lectures are a fine way to impart raw information. But it's not enough

to make disciples who make other disciples. Information transfer isn't

enough, we need life transfer. Don't tell me, show me.

Jon Reid

When preachers hold a Bible in their hands, they hold nothing more

than pages of inkPreaching brings the ink of the text alivemakes it

real. The goal of preaching is to hand on an experience of God.

Tom Rogers

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/toni‑r

idgaway‑10‑last‑minute‑preaching‑tips‑994.asp

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10 Preaching Questions with Tim Keller by Colin Adams

Colin Adams interviews Tim Keller about the greatest perils in

preaching, sermon prep, and balancing the demands of leadership.

In great faith, I have written to a number of better‑known preachers on both sides of the Atlantic. Each of them

has been sent ten questions on the subject of preaching. The following

is Tim Kellers response. For those of you who dont know, Timothy J.

Keller is an author, a speaker, and the founding pastor of Redeemer

Presbyterian Church (PCA) in New York City, New York. Find here a

more complete biography.

1. Where do you place the importance of preaching in the grand scheme

of church life?

It is central, but not alone at the center. Pastoral ministry is as

important as preaching ministry, and lay "every‑member" ministry is as

crucial as ordained ministry. I wouldnt make a hierarchy out of these

thingsthey are interdependent. But pastoral ministry and lay ministry

are not substitutes for strong preaching.

2. In a paragraph, how did you discover your gifts in preaching?

I preached about 200 different expositions a year for the first nine

years of my ministry (when I was age 24 through 33). During that time

I was considered interesting and good but I never got a lot of

feedback that I was anything special. Ive grown a lot through lots of

practice.

3. How long (on average) does it take you to prepare a sermon?

I pastor a large church and have a large staff, and so I give special

prominence to preparing the sermon. I give it 1520 hours a week. I

would not advise younger ministers to spend so much time, however. The

main way to become a good preacher is to preach a lot, and to spend

tons of time in people workthat is how you grow from becoming not

just a Bible commentator but a flesh and blood preacher. When I was a

pastor without a large staff, I put in six to eight hours on a sermon.

4. Is it important to you that a sermon contain one major theme or

idea? If so, how do you crystallize it?

I dont know that Id be so rigid as to say there has to be just one

Big Idea every time. That is a good discipline for preachers in

general, because it helps with clarity. Most texts have too much in

them for the preacher to cover in one address. You must be selective.

But sometimes a preaching‑size text simply has two or three major

ideas that are too good to pass up.

5. What is the most important aspect of a preachers style and what

should he avoid?

He should combine warmth and authority/force. That is hard to do,

since temperamentally we incline one way or the other. (And many, many

of us show neither warmth nor force in preaching.)

6. What notes, if any, do you use?

I use a very detailed outline, with many key phrases in each sub‑point

written out word for word.

7. What are the greatest perils that a preacher must avoid?

This seems to me too big a question to tackle here. Virtually

everything a preacher ought to do has a corresponding peril‑to‑avoid.

For examples, preaching should be Biblical, clear (for the mind),

practical (for the will), vivid (for the heart,) warm, forceful, and

Christo‑centric. You should avoid the opposites of all these things.

8. How do you fight to balance preparation for preaching with other

important responsibilities (e.g., pastoral care, leadership

responsibilities)?

See my remarks on #3 above. It is a very great mistake to pit pastoral

care and leadership against preaching preparation. It is only through

doing people‑work that you become the preacher you need to besomeone

who knows sin, how the heart works, what peoples struggles are, and

so on. Pastoral care and leadership are to some degree sermon prep.

More accurately, it is preparing the preacher, not just the sermon.

Prayer also prepares the preacher, not just the sermon.

9. What books on preaching, or exemplars of it, have you found most

influential in your own preaching?

British preachers have had a much greater impact on me than American

preachers. And the American preachers who have been most influential

(e.g., Jonathan Edwards) were essentially British anyway.

10. What steps do you take to nurture or encourage developing or

future preachers?

I havent done much on that front at all, and Im not happy about

that. Currently I meet with two other younger preachers on my staff

who also preach regularly. We talk specifically about their preaching

and sermon prep.

Colin Adams

Unashamedworkman.wordpress.comColin Adams is the pastor of Ballymoney

Baptist Church, Northern Ireland. For six years Colin had the

privilege of serving as an Associate Pastor with Charlotte Baptist

Chapel in Edinburgh. Before coming to Edinburgh he studied theology

for four years at International Christian College in Glasgow.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/colin‑

adams‑10‑preaching‑questions‑with‑tim‑keller‑930.asp?utm\_source=newslet

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The Danger of the Front Row by Steven Furtick

- 8/2011.101

Danger of the Front Row

The Danger of the Front Row by Steven Furtick

If you want your church or organization to reach its full potential,

you have to get the people with back‑row complacency to have front‑row

enthusiasm and motivation.Email this articlePrint FriendlyAt

Elevation, the people who sit on the front row are hardcore. During

worship and the sermon, they go nuts. Theyre raising their hands,

singing to the top of their lungs, saying amen, nodding their heads,

and scribbling notes furiously.

Because of the way the auditorium is lit, all I can see are the people

on the front row. And if you only judged the atmosphere of the room by

the front row, youd get the impression that everyones into this and

that everyones getting it.

But if you look through to the back of the room, its not the same.

You notice more people disengaged. Their arms are crossed. Theyre

mouthing the words to songs, if theyre singing at all. When youre

preaching, its as if their face has forgotten that their soul got

saved.

As leaders, its easy to find ourselves only paying attention to the

people on the front row. And Im not just talking about the front row

in the context of worship. We spend most of our time focused on those

who are super‑committed and involved, and understandably so. Theyre

where we want everyone to be. Theyre encouraging and life‑affirming.

They make us feel like were moving forward and not wasting our time.

But the dangerous thing about the front row is that it can skew your

assessment of the room and make you think your church or organization

is in a better place than it is. You have to be aware of the whole

room, not just the front row. You know, the 7080% of the room that is

more complacent, not just the hardcore 2030%.

There are so many people in the rest of the room that arent into what

youre doing yet. They havent gotten it. They havent bought in. They

may need to be brought along a little differently than your crew in

the front row. You may need to alter your approach to reach them and

get them onboard.

Im not saying you should ignore your fan base. Theyre your most

important asset. I fully believe you should preach to the most

passionate people in the room. Some bottom‑feeders are always going to

do what they do, so we shouldnt settle for the lowest common

denominator of commitment and enthusiasm. That will get you nowhere.

But we also cant afford to forever function on the passion and

commitment of the front row. If you want your church or organization

to reach its full potential, you have to get the people with back‑row

complacency to have front‑row enthusiasm and motivation. And in order

to do that, you first have to be able to correctly gauge the entire

atmosphere.

Assess the whole room. Work your fan base. Preach to the most

passionate people in the room. Just dont leave the 7080% on the back

rows behind.

Steven Furtick

StevenFurtick.comSteven Furtick is the Lead Pastor of Elevation

Church, an incredible move of God in Charlotte, NC with more than

9,000 in attendance each week among (soon‑to‑be) six locations. He is

the author of the book, Sun Stand Still. He lives in Charlotte with

his wife Holly and their three children, Elijah, Graham and Abbey.

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Shotgun or Sniper - What's Your Preaching Strategy: Shotgun or Sniper? by Peter Mead

- 8/2011.101

Shotgun or Sniper

What's Your Preaching Strategy: Shotgun or Sniper? by Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net

It is too easy to drift into another passage (or ten) and dissipate

the impact of the passage we said we would preach. Email this

articlePrint FriendlyGenerally speaking, I urge preachers to stay in

their preaching text as they prepare and as they preach. It is too

easy to drift into another passage (or ten) and dissipate the impact

of the passage we said we would preach. However, one of the

exceptions that I do tend to mention is when the passage you are

preaching quotes or alludes to or relies in some way on another Bible

passage. What then?

Actually, the more we know our Bibles, the more we see by way of

allusion as we look at the text. I did an exercise with a group of

pastors where we worked through - Ephesians 2 - Ephesians 2

and thought about Old Testament passages that might have been in Paul

s thinking as he wrote, or even specific wording that he used. We

were coming up with Old Testament passages for almost every verse in

the chapter! What to do?

1. In preparation, go to OT passages that may be helpful, but dont

lose your focus on your preaching text. It can be a rich exercise to

go back and see the text and context of the fall in - Genesis

3 - Genesis 3}, the possible wording from - Genesis 6 - Genesis

6}, the session of Christ in - Psalm 110 - Psalms 110}, the

far‑and‑near reference in - Isaiah 57 - Isaiah 57}, the

background of circumcision language in - Genesis 17 - Genesis

17} and elsewhere, etc. But remember that you need to be able to

preach - Ephesians 2 - Ephesians 2}! It may feel like a

sawn‑off shotgun has scattered marks all over the canon, but that is

my blessing, not my listeners burden!

2. In preaching, only go to one or two OT passages if they are

genuinely helpful, but dont lose your focus on your preaching text.

Listeners simply cannot handle masses of other references. It turns a

sharp and pointed message into an annoying multi‑point prodding. If

one or maybe two references are particularly helpful, then use them

carefully. In Ephesians 2:110, for instance, Id be inclined to go

to - Genesis 3 - Genesis 3} in the early verses, but I wouldn

t chase multiple other references. Perhaps - Psalm

110:1 - Psalms 110:1} in reference to being seated with Christ.

Probably no more. Better to hit home specifically than to scatter

shot everywhere.

My personal goal includes getting to know the Word of God as much as

possible (not as an end in itself, but since through the Word I can

know God). My goal in preaching is not to show that off, but to help

people be impacted by this particular text.

Peter Mead

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Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

church in the UK. He serves as director of Cor Deoan innovative

mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

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Check Your Church's Outreach Heartbeat by Kevin Harney

Church's Outreach Heartbeat

- 8/2011.101

Church's Outreach Heartbeat

Check Your Church's Outreach Heartbeat by Kevin Harney

OrganicOutreach.org SeismicShifts.com

If your church is struggling to invest in reaching your community and

the world, ask yourself this question: Are we a church that is on fire

with a passion for God?Email this articlePrint FriendlyWhen God looks

at his bride, the church, he longs for her to have a healthy

heartbeat. He wants our hearts to beat with his love for the lost, and

he longs for evangelistic passion to flow through our veins. The Maker

of heaven and earth wants to see each and every church alive with love

for the lost and engaged in reaching out with the message and grace of

Jesus in natural, organic ways.

God wants to draw people into our fellowship with the assurance that

they will be embraced by grace and introduced to the Savior, Jesus.

But this can happen only when the people in our church are deeply in

love with God.

When we are, our heartbeat is strong. When we do not love God, it is

difficult for us to love others. As God looks at the spiritual monitor

that registers the evangelistic heartbeat of a church, he sees one of

several different patterns. What do you think God sees when he looks

at your church?

FLATLINE

Some churches have a loud, high drone and a flatline on their heart

monitor. There is no love for God, nor is there a relentless love for

the lost. These churches are closed off to visitors, their community,

and the world. They dont reach out or train their members to share

Jesus love.

Prayer for their community is nonexistent. There was a heartbeat at

some time in the distant past, but today the church is flatlining.

If this describes your church, dont lose hope! We believe in a God

who can raise the dead. Heaven is watching your churchs heart

monitor, and the Spirit of God is always ready to send a pulse of

heavenly energy into your congregations heart to bring it back to

life. God is ready to return your church to her first love, Jesus

Christ. And the Holy Spirit is ready to move your church from apathy

to passion.

WEAK PULSE

Sometimes when a doctor checks for a pulse, hell say, I have a

pulse, but its weak. There is still life in the body, but action

needs to be taken quickly to sustain it.

Many churches have a pulse and there is life, but its faint. There is

love for God and for people, but it is waning.

If this is a picture of your church, be honest and admit it. You might

have a map on a wall somewhere with several pins showing where you

send money to support missionaries. You might do an event or two each

year that spiritual seekers are welcome to attend. You might even

try to be friendly if a guest or visitor happens to wander into your

church on a Sunday morning.

But honestly, your passion for outreach is gone.

Your church lacks a desperate love for God that will drive you into

the world with his good news. You are nice to people who visit your

church, but you dont go out of your way to reach those who are far

from God. You send money overseas, but you dont engage the mission

field right next door.

If this describes your congregation, you too need to fall in love with

GodFather, Son, and Holy Spiritall over again. Yes, you still care.

You love God, and you love people. But it is time to rehabilitate your

congregations heart.

You might need to do some spiritual exercise and fortify your heart to

make it beat strongly again. The heart is a muscle, and if you use it,

it becomes stronger.

RAPID HEARTBEAT

Sometimes a heart races wildly. This can be very dangerous, because if

a persons heart pumps too fast for too long, it can lead to cardiac

arrest and eventually death.

Some churches monitor shows that their heart is beating two or three

times faster than a healthy heart. Because these churches love God and

want to be faithful to his love for lost people, they launch outreach

program after outreach program and initiative after initiative. Church

members grow tired and exhausted as the congregation jumps into the

latest evangelistic fads.

Outreach is not organic in a church like this. Instead, it feels

fabricated and inauthentic. While the motives are right, the practice

of outreach is so forced that it fails to bear much fruit. Churches

like this often experience frustration when they try lots of programs

but never find something that works. They invest lots of money and

time, and they genuinely love God, but lost people rarely come to know

and embrace Jesus.

These churches need to love God enough to slow down. If they want to

establish an organic culture of outreach, they need to do less to

accomplish more. Better yet, they need to channel their energy, time,

and resources into a sustainable approach to church‑wide evangelism.

Whatever the condition of your churchs heart, know that God is ready

to increase your love quotient. Evangelism is not a sprint; its a

marathon. Its not a fad; its the fabric of a healthy church. It's

not a system or a program; its the natural fruit of a church that

loves God.

GETTING BACK TO YOUR FIRST LOVE

The first and most critical step a church needs to take to move toward

healthy outreach is to develop a growing love for God. In the book of

Revelation, Jesus says to the church of Ephesus, Yet I hold this

against you: You have forsaken your first love. Whenever our love for

God ceases to be first place in our hearts, our vision for reaching

out wanes.

Jesus made this clear when he taught his disciples that the first and

most important of all the commandments is to love the Lord your God

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and

with all your strength. This is not just our calling as individual

followers of Christ; it is also our calling as a church. If we forget

our first love, our collective heart will grow cold, and nothing that

we do will have the impact we desire.

Loving God does not begin with our own efforts. It is based on the

awareness that God was passionately seeking us long before we ever

sought him. In the letter of First John, we find a powerful tutorial

on the love of God. We learn, first and foremost, that God is love.

Because of his love for us, we can become children of God. The depth

of the Fathers love was revealed when he sent his only Son to this

earth to die in our place, on the cross, for our sins. As we are

grounded in Gods love for us and as we learn to walk in this love, we

will continue to grow in our love for people and for God.

If your church is struggling to invest in reaching your community and

the world, ask yourself this question: are we a church that is on fire

with a passion for God? If reaching out to others has been pushed to

the back burner (or off the stove entirely), it probably wont help to

add some spice to the meal. You need to start by turning up the heat.

Maybe your church has lost its first love.

Remember, God so loved the world that he gave.

Love gives. And when a congregations heart pounds hard for God, we

give of ourselvesour time, our resources, our livesto love others.

This article adapted from Organic Outreach for Churches.

Kevin Harney

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health including: Organic Outreach for Ordinary People, The U‑Turn

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along with the web site OrganicOutreach.org with free outreach

resources

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The New Normal of Preaching by Wayne Cordeiro

- 8/2011.101

New Normal of Preaching

The New Normal of Preaching by Wayne Cordeiro

It's no longer what I want to teach; it's how they best

learn.Email this articlePrint FriendlyAlthough I plan my messages out

in advance, there is more that leaders must consider when teaching. We

all know that it is important to know what you are teaching, but it is

becoming even more important to know how they are learning! Each

generation has their own modality by which they best absorb new

information.

I have three children. One of them likes phone calls. The other likes

e‑mail, and the youngest demands that I text her. I called her one

day, thinking how nice a dad I was for thinking of her. She answered

in exasperated tones: Dad, DONT call me! What if I were in a movie?

Text me, Dad. Text me!

We need to start at a new starting point. It is no longer what I

want to teach. It is how they best learn! Here are a few tips:

1. Use more word pictures.

Young people have grown up with computers, television, computer games,

and other illustrated ways in which they interact. Word pictures help

your listeners mentally track with you.

2. Let them interact with you.

Interaction is important to the new learners. Your listeners want to

talk back to the communicator. Laughter is one way. Another is

reading aloud. One thing I do is to let them finish a sentence for me.

God is not against us! He is really (The answer, if you cant

figure it out, is for us!)

3. Use personal illustrations to underscore a truth.

Listeners want to know if you have experienced what you are talking

about. They want to know if you have felt the pain or the struggle.

They want transparency and authenticity. New teachers teach not only

out of their knowledge but also out of their scars.

4. Simplify without becoming remedial.

One person said that communicators take complicated subjects and make

them simple. Teachers, on the other hand, take simple subjects and

make them complicated. The world needs communicators who will help

them understand the simplicity of Gods love and ways.

5. Take the time to explain things theologically.

People will no longer settle for pat answers. Loyalty to a

denomination or to a body of pre‑approved knowledge no longer exists.

They are curious and want to know why. Why is homosexuality something

that is unacceptable in the Bible? Why is living together frowned

upon? What is wrong with drinking alcohol? How can Christian leaders

be so hypocritical and not think anything about it?

Alvin Toffler said: Those who are the literate of the future will not

be those who can read and write. It will be those who can learn,

un‑learn, and re‑learn.

There are many habits we must un‑learn, and then re‑learn new ways of

delivering the timeless message of Jesus Christ. Its not about

technology. Its about gearing our delivery to the ways they learn

best. I remember an adage from my old Youth for Christ days: Anchored

to the Rock; geared to the times.

It still rings true today.

Wayne Cordeiro

MentoringLeaders.comWayne Cordeiro is the founding pastor of New Hope

Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, Hawaii with over 14,500 in weekend

attendance. New Hope is also listed as one of the top ten most

innovative churches in America with Outreach magazine, listing them as

one of the top five churches to learn from. New Hope is known for

redeeming the arts and technology. Over 3000 attend services each

week via the Internet, and New Hope has seen over 73,000 first‑time

decisions in Hawaii since its inception 26 years ago.

He has authored ten books, including such classics as Doing Church as

a Team, Dream Releasers, Seven Rules of Success, Attitudes That

Attract Success, Divine Mentor, Leading on Empty and The Encore

Church. Wayne is also the author of the Life Journal, which is being

used by thousands of churches worldwide, is bringing people back to

the Word of God.

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Ed Stetzer: Avoid Any Hint

- 8/2011.101

Ed Stetzer: Avoid Any Hint

Ed Stetzer

EdStetzer.com

Too many pastors have lost credibility because of the appearance of

immorality. Don't be one of them.Email this articlePrint FriendlyI had

an awkward situation recently. My doctor prescribed a sleep study

(part of some health tests I am doing in preparation for my

forthcoming new health regimen).

The tech called me to arrange the details. She did not seem to have

many details about the clinic, so I asked some questions. One of which

was the settingin this case, it was an office building with several

faux bedrooms where they would wire me up and measure me sleeping.

I asked about the staff, and she was "it."

Then came that awkward moment. I knew she would not understand it, but

I explained, "I can't come if it is just you and me in the building."

It was awkward, and I am guessing few ever said such a thing. So I

skipped out on my study (and will probably have to pay the no‑show

charge).

It might seem silly to you, but let me encourage you not to see it as

such. Many of you who read this are young pastors. I know too many

pastors who have lost great credibility because of an accusation (let

alone an indiscretion).

I am not irresistible. I have a great face for radio. I do not think

that anyone will swoon over me. But I do not know the stability,

morality, and disposition of people that I meet.

When I told my wife, I thought she might slap me. She has been excited

about my recent health plans. However, she was the opposite. She felt

protected and affirmed. She knew I would not put our family in

jeopardy.

I remember Danny Akin once saying that he would not pick up a woman on

the side of the road in the rain if her car broke down. He would never

be alone with a woman not his wife. It seemed a bit selfish until he

told the rest of the story. He would pull over and give her the keys

and let her drive where she needed to be.

Guarding yourself takes work, can be awkward, and is often

inconvenient. But one problem averted makes it a good stewardship of

your life, ministry, and family.

At the churches I planted, we always used something like Saddleback's

Ten Commandments:

Thou shalt not go to lunch alone with the opposite sex.

Thou shalt not have the opposite sex pick you up or drive you places

when it is just the two of you.

Thou shalt not kiss any attendee of the opposite sex or show affection

that could be questioned.

Thou shalt not visit the opposite sex alone at home.

Thou shalt not counsel the opposite sex alone at the office, and thou

shalt not counsel the opposite sex more than once without that

person's mate. Refer them.

Thou shalt not discuss detailed sexual problems with the opposite sex

in counseling. Refer them.

Thou shalt not discuss your marriage problems with an attendee of the

opposite sex.

Thou shalt be careful in answering e‑mails, instant messages, chat

rooms, cards, or letters from the opposite sex.

Thou shalt make your co‑worker your protective ally.

Thou shalt pray for the integrity of other staff members.

(The first four do not apply to unmarried staff.)

I hope you have a list like this for your own life and ministry.

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality..."

( - Ephesians 5:3 - Ephesians 5:3})

Ed Stetzer

EdStetzer.comEd Stetzer is President of LifeWay Research and LifeWays

Missiologist in Residence. He has trained pastors and church planters

on five continents, holds two masters degrees and two doctorates, and

has written dozens of articles and books. Ed is a contributing editor

for Christianity Today, a columnist for Outreach Magazine and Catalyst

Monthly, serves on the advisory council of Sermon Central and

Christianity Today's Building Church Leaders, and is frequently cited

or interviewed in news outlets such as USAToday and CNN.

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7 Biblical Principles for Preaching on Divorce and Remarriage by Kevin DeYoung

- 8/2011.101

7 Principles Divorce and Remarriage

7 Biblical Principles for Preaching on Divorce and Remarriage by Kevin

DeYoung

Kevin De Young: "The hard thing is to take a few biblical principles

about marriage, divorce, and remarriage and then try to apply them

prayerfully and wisely to a thousand different situations."Email this

articlePrint FriendlyI preached this sermon, entitled What Did Jesus

Think of Divorce and Remarriage, at URC on October 24, 2010. The bulk

of the sermon moves through seven principles of divorce and

remarriage.

1. Marriage is the sacred union between one man and one woman and God

s intention is for marriage to last a lifetime.

2. Divorce is not always sinful.

3. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of sexual

immorality.

4. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of desertion

by an unbelieving spouse.

5. When the divorce was not permissible, any subsequent remarriage (to

someone other than the original spouse) results in adultery.

6. In situations where the divorce was permissible, remarriage is also

permissible.

7. Improperly divorced and remarried Christians should stay as they

are, but repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever

amends are necessary.

Since the topic is so difficult, nuanced, and emotional, I wrote out a

manuscriptjust to be extra careful. The whole sermon, with a few

minor tweaks, is reprinted below.

There are a couple challenges that make preaching on divorce and

remarriage especially difficult. One challenge is that there are so

many legitimate approaches I could take with this sermon.

I could make the sermon a warning: Marriage is sacred. Remember your

vows. Jesus never encouraged divorce. So dont do it. I could

legitimately preach this way because the weight of the New Testament

falls on the side of warning against divorce.

But I could also use the sermon to talk about Gods compassion for

those who have been hurt in marriage, or those left behind in

marriage, or those sinned against in marriage.

I could take the sermon in a different direction encourage those who

have sinned in divorce or sinned in remarriage to repent and receive

Gods merciful forgiveness. I could also take more of a theological

approach and try to explain the acceptable grounds for divorce and

remarriage, asking questions like: Are there any justifiable reasons

for divorce? If so, what are they? And if you may get divorced under

certain circumstances, what about remarriage?

I wish I had time to go deep pastorally and theologically in all these

way, but I just cant in one sermon. Thats the first challenge.

The other challenge in preaching on this topic is that there are so

many unique scenarios that dont lend themselves to easy answers. Many

of you will listen to this sermon not simply for theological

information, but youll be listening to hear if I think God thinks

your divorce was acceptable, or whether your parents remarriage was

appropriate, or whether you are free to remarry now that you are

divorced. There are so many intricate, specific situations that I can

t possibly speak to all of them. These situations require tremendous

wisdom because its not always clear what is the correct counsel.

For example:

A wife commits adultery. She is repentant and wants to save the

marriage. The husband knows he must forgive, but he wants to file for

divorce? Would you grant him that right? Does it make any difference

if the wife was frequently unfaithful?

A wife gets a divorce because of marital unfaithfulness? Youve

determined she has legitimate grounds for that divorce. Is she then

free to remarry? What if the husband repents, is he? Or only to his

ex‑wife? And what if she gets remarried, does that change his

obligation?

A non‑Christian couple gets a divorce. Later the man becomes a

Christian and realizes the divorce was wrong. Is he obligated to try

to win back his non‑Christian ex‑wife? What if he tries to be

reconciled and his ex‑wife has no interest, is he free to remarry in

the Lord?

A remarried couple comes to realize their divorce and remarriage

was sinful. Are they committing adultery by staying married? If they

stay married, what should they do to make things right? Can they be

members in the church? What about leaders?

Both husband and wife commit adultery. They both have grounds for

divorce and they are both the guilty party. Would you allow a

divorce? Two years later they are both sincerely repentant. Should

they remarry each other? Could they remarry someone else?

There are as many scenarios as there are couples in the world. How do

we know whats right in each situation, especially when so many of the

scenarios have no parallel in Scripture? The simple thing is to turn a

blind eye to divorce in the church. Just pretend it doesnt happen.

Dont ask people about it. Dont bring it up. Dont say anything

during a membership interview. The hard thing is to take a few

biblical principles about marriage, divorce, and remarriage and then

try to apply them prayerfully and wisely to a thousand different

situations.

Seven Principles

Let me give you seven biblical principles on divorce and remarriage.

1. Marriage is the sacred union between one man and one woman and God

s intention is for marriage to last a lifetime.

Look at - Mark 10:1‑12 - Mark 10:1‑12}:

And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the

Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his

custom, he taught them. And Pharisees came up and in order to test him

asked, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? He answered them,

What did Moses command you? They said, Moses allowed a man to write

a certificate of divorce and to send her away. And Jesus said to

them, Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this

commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male

and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and

hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they

are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined

together, let not man separate. And in the house the disciples asked

him again about this matter. And he said to them, Whoever divorces

his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she

divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.

This was a trap. The Pharisees were not genuinely inquiring of Jesus

position. They wanted to test him and make him look bad. Everyone in

Judaism agreed that divorce was permissible. You can read all the same

scholarly stuff Ive been reading and the same Jewish documents and

see that people on all sides of the divorce issue agree first century

Judaism allowed for divorce, even required it in some situations. The

Pharisees certainly allowed for divorce, and as well see in a moment,

probably for a lot of reasons. But they have a suspicion that Jesus

will be stricter. Maybe they heard his teaching in the Sermon on the

Mount. Maybe they just assume he will be strict. Maybe they want to

get him in trouble with Herod who already killed John the Baptist for

objecting to his divorce. Whatever the reason, they are setting a

trap.

Like a good teacher, Jesus answers their question with a question.

What did Moses say? Well, they answer, Moses allowed a man to

divorce his wife. Theyre think of - Deuteronomy

24 - Deuteronomy 24} which well come back to in a minute. Jesus doesn

t reject Moses teaching, but he recasts it. Yes, Moses allowed for

divorce. But this was a concession to human sin. Certainly not a

requirement. The law was making the best of a bad situation. Then

Jesus takes them back to the very beginning. Deuteronomy gives Moses

a concession, but Genesis gives Gods intention. Marriage is one man

and one woman. The two become one flesh. They leave their family

behind and this new family takes priority over all other allegiances

except to God. Marriage is a sacred union. God himself joins the

couple together. And what God puts together, no one should separate.

The main thing Jesus wants to say about divorce is this: dont do it.

Its not Gods intention for marriage. Its not what you promised

before God and a room full of witnesses. In fact, Jesus says pretty

flatly in verses 11‑12, anyone who divorces husband or wife and

remarries someone else commits adultery. Why? Because the divorce

shouldnt have happened in the first place. Theres no reason this man

and woman shouldnt still be married. So for them to be married to

someone else, presumably having sex with someone else, is like

committing adultery. You may be sleeping with someone who is your

husband or wife, but you arent sleeping with the person who still

should be your husband or wife.

Before we see anything else about divorce and remarriage we have to

feel the weight of what Jesus is saying. The Pharisees want to talk

about acceptable reasons for a divorce. Jesus wants to talk about the

sanctity of marriage. They want to talk about when a marriage can be

broken. He wants to talk about why marriages shouldnt be broken. If

all you hear are the reasons a marriage covenant might be broken, its

like learning to fly by practicing your crash landings or training for

battle by practicing your retreats. Whatever exceptions there might

be, the main thing is that marriage is supposed to be permanent.

2. Divorce is not always sinful.

Is every divorce the product of sin? Yes. Is every divorce therefore

sinful? No. Thats why its not always a fair comparison to say

Look, you Christians are so worked up about homosexuality, but you

dont do anything about divorce. Certainly, Christians have too often

turned a blind eye to divorce, but the situations are different

because divorce, unlike homosexuality, is not always wrong.

Think of the Christmas story. When Joseph, who was engaged to Mary,

found that she was with child, the text says that Because Joseph was

a righteous man he had in mind to divorce her quietly. The first

thing we notice is that Joseph had to divorce Mary even though they

were only engaged. Jewish betrothals were legally binding in the

first century. Leaving that aside, we also see that Joseph was

considered righteous for divorcing her quietly. He is commended for

the quietness mostly, but the divorce didnt seem to reflect badly on

Joseph. Mary, it was thought, had committed sexual immorality, and so

Joseph was considered righteous for divorcing her quietly.

We also see in some Old Testament texts that the Lord divorced his

people. For example, - Jeremiah 3:8 - Jeremiah 3:8} says I

gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away

because of all her adulteries. Gods people were spiritual adulterers

and so the Lord after putting up with them for generations, finally

said, Enough, youve broken the covenant for the last time. Heres

your certificate of divorce. Be gone. Now, the love story is that

God still woos his wayward bride back to himself, and welcomes her

home when she turns and repents. But if the Lord can divorce his

adulterous spouse, then divorce must not always be wrong.

One other thing to note is that marriage is not indissoluble. This

means marriage really can end. Now, usually they shouldnt. But they

can. The covenant can be severed. When Jesus says What God has joined

together, let no man separate he implies that the couple can be

separated. I mention this because sometimes people will argue against

remarriage saying Shes still married in Gods eyes. I dont think

thats the right way to talk about the situation. Divorced couples are

divorced. They are not married in Gods eyes. The question is whether

they should still be married and hence, they ought not to be with

another man or woman.

3. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of sexual

immorality.

We need to look at a few different passages, starting with

- Deuteronomy 24:1‑4 - Deuteronomy 24:1‑4}.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in

his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her

a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of

his house, and she departs out of his house, 2 and if she goes and

becomes another mans wife, 3 and the latter man hates her and writes

her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out

of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,

4 then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again

to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination

before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the

LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

The key phrase is in verse 1: something indecent (erwath dabar). It

s a very ambiguous phrase, and the Jews argued about it constantly.

The phrase is actually used a chapter earlier in

- Deuteronomy 23:12‑14 - Deuteronomy 23:12‑14}.

You shall have a place outside the camp, and you shall go out to it.

And you shall have a trowel with your tools, and when you sit down

outside, you shall dig a hole with it and turn back and cover up your

excrement. Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp,

to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your

camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you

and turn away from you.

You can see that erwath dabar means in general something repulsive,

something indecent. Its not a precise phrase. Because of this

ambiguity, two different rabbinical schools emerged. On one side was

the more conservative Shammai school, and on the other, the more

liberal Hillel school, both well known around the time of Jesus. The

Mishna records:

The School of Shammai say: A man may not divorce his wife unless he

has found unchastity in her, for it is written, Because he hath found

in her indecency in anything. And the School of Hillel say: [He may

divorce her] even if she spoiled a dish for him, for it is written,

Because he hath found in her indecency in anything.

They referred to the same verse, but Shammai emphasized indecency

and Hillel emphasized anything. Jesus is going to side squarely

with the more conservative school. Turn to - Matthew

19 - Matthew 19}. This is the same incident we read about earlier in

Mark. The Pharisees have come to test Jesus. They specifically ask him

about the grounds for divorce and what Moses commanded in

- Deuteronomy 24 - Deuteronomy 24}. But notice Jesus words

here are a bit different. They include an exception in

- verse 9 - Deuteronomy 24:9}: I tell you that anyone who

divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness [porneia], and

marries another woman commits adultery [moichaomai]. Divorce is not

allowed for any reason whatsoever (like Hillel said), only for martial

unfaithfulness (like Shammai said). Sexual sin breaks the marriage

covenant because sex is the oath signing of the covenant. Having

sexual experiences with someone other than your spouse is like trying

to sign on someone elses dotted line. That breaks the covenant and

is a ground for divorce. Divorce is still not required, but it is

allowed.

Of course, all this raises the question: why does Matthew include the

exception clause when Mark doesnt? Some people have argued that

Matthews gospel isnt talking about sex during marriage, but sex

before marriage. In first century Judaism a betrothal was legally

binding. Thats why Joseph was going to divorce Mary after he found

out she was with child. They were only engaged at the time, but even

breaking off an engagement required a divorce. So the theory is

Matthew records these words so his readers will be clear that Joseph

wasnt doing anything wrong when he planned to divorce Mary for what

seemed to be fornication.

Some Christians I really respect hold to this view, but I dont think

it will work. For starters, the question from the Pharisees revolves

around - Deuteronomy 24 - Deuteronomy 24} which was not about

betrothal. Second, the word porneia is a broad word that includes all

kinds of sexual sin, not just sex before marriage while engaged. And

besides, - Matthew 1 - Matthew 1} never uses the word porneia

to describe Marys supposed sin and nothing in - Matthew

19 - Matthew 19} explicitly ties the situation back to Mary and Joseph.

So how do we understand thisMatthew includes the exception, while

Mark and Luke dont? Remember these are parallel accounts. They are

describing the same event. You could say the Matthew added something

to Jesus words, but isnt is easier to assume Mark and Luke left

something out? And why would they leave the exception out? Because

they wanted the saying more memorable? Perhaps. But I think the basic

reason they left out the exception is because it was already a given.

No one in Judaism disagreed that divorce was acceptable on grounds of

sexual immorality. Mark and Luke didnt have to include Jesus

exception because they figured it was a given. Its like when Jesus

said If your brother has something against you, leave your gift at

the altar and go be reconciled first ( - Matt.

5:23‑24 - Matthew 5:23‑24}). We naturally assume Jesus means If your

brother has something legitimate against you, because Jesus didnt go

tracking down everyone who was upset with him. In the same way, when

Mark records Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits

adultery against her the implied assumption is Whoever divorces his

wife without cause I believe Jesus spoke the exception clause.

Matthew included it to be clear, while Mark and Luke left it out

because they thought it was already a given.

4. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of desertion

by an unbelieving spouse.

Turn to - 1 Corinthians 7 - 1 Corinthians 7}. Lets pick

things up at - verse 8 - 1 Corinthians 7:8}.

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to

remain single as I am. 9 But if they cannot exercise self‑control,

they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with

passion.

Paul would like everyone to stay as they are (cf. 17, 20), but if they

have to marry, then go ahead and marry. Thats what he says to the

singles and widows. This is what he says to the married.

10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife

should not separate from her husband.

Paul is saying, This is not my own rule. I got this from Jesus.

(but if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to

her husband) and the husband should not divorce his wife.

So if someone does get wrongly divorce, they should try to be

reconciled with their spouse or stay single. They should not remarry

after an illegitimate divorce.

12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord):

He means, This command is not from the lips of Jesus himself, but it

s still a command you need to follow.

that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents

to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a

husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she

should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy

because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of

her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is,

they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be

so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has

called you to peace. 16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will

save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save

your wife.

Heres the second ground for a divorce: desertion by an unbelieving

spouse. Now, we should try to live at peace with an unbelieving

spouse. After all, God may save your spouse through you.

Reconciliation is still the ideal. But if the unbeliever refuses to

live with you and leaves, let him do so. You are not bound to be

married when your unbelieving spouse deserts you.

The traditional Protestant positionthe position written down in the

Westminster Confession and held by most evangelicalsis that divorce

is permissible on two grounds: sexual immorality and desertion. In

both case the marriage covenant is severed. In one case, because

sexual intimacy has taken place with another. And in the second case,

because the spouse just plain isnt there.

Let me just add that I am sympathetic to and yet extremely cautious

about finding other grounds for divorce. On the one hand, I think its

possible that God did not mean to give us every possible grounds for

divorce in the New Testament. Jesus gave one and Paul (admittedly,

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit), mentioned another one

relevant to the Corinthian situation. So might there be one or two

other grounds for divorce? Perhaps. And yet, if you say that you open

up a Pandoras box of trouble. People will argue that psychological

abuse is a ground and emotional neglect is a ground and maybe terrible

unhappiness is a ground for divorce. I think it is safer biblically to

maintain that there are two acceptable grounds for divorce. But having

said that, I could envision in extreme situations the elders might

conclude: This man (or woman) has not completely disappeared but his

life is tantamount to desertion. If a guy is strung out on drugs,

gambling all their worldly possessions, and has repeatedly beaten his

wife, might that count as desertion at some point?

This is why each case needs to be dealt with individually. Its also

why we need biblical principles, so we have something to apply in

these gut‑wrenching, difficult sinful scenarios.

5. When the divorce was not permissible, any subsequent remarriage (to

someone other than the original spouse) results in adultery.

Weve already seen Jesus make this point in - Mark 10 - Mark

10}. If you are illegitimately divorced, then the remarriage is also

illegitimate. This doesnt mean you arent really divorce and you aren

t really remarried. It means you shouldnt have been divorced. The

covenant hadnt been broken and shouldnt have been severed.

Consequently, you shouldnt be married to someone other than your

original spouse. And that means if you are remarried that new sexual

relationship is sinful. So what do you do if you are already in a

sinful second marriage? Ill come back to that in the last point.

6. In situations where the divorce was permissible, remarriage is also

permissible.

Now what about remarriage? Remarriage is clearly allowed after a

spouse dies ( - Romans 7:3 - Romans 7:3}). But what about

after a biblically sanctioned divorce? Let me give you a few reasons

why I think remarriage is permissible.

First, I think grammatically it is more likely that the exception

clause in - Matthew 19 - Matthew 19} modified both verbs. In

other words, when Jesus says except for marital unfaithfulness that

covers whoever divorces and marries another.

Second, all scholars on every side of this divorce and remarriage

debate agree that it was a given for first century Jews that

remarriage was a valid option after a valid divorce. To be granted a

legal separation meant de facto that you were no longer bound to

anyone and thus free to remarry. No one in Jesus audience was thinking

that remarriage wouldnt be an option. If Jesus wanted to teach that

remarriage after every divorce was unacceptable, he would have made

that new teaching much clearer.

Third, the phrase is not enslaved in - 1 Corinthians

7:15 - 1 Corinthians 7:15} probably implies that the spouse who has

been deserted is free to marry. This would have been the default

Jewish position and it seems to be the same idea found clearly in

- v. 39 - 1 Corinthians 7:39} (she is free to be married to

whom she wishes). The Greek word is different in - verse

15 - 1 Corinthians 7:15}, but they are related words that convey the

same idea.

Of course, just because a divorced person may be free to remarry does

not mean it is necessarily a good or wise idea. A lot of other

considerations come into play. But the general principles is, after a

legitimate divorce, there is freedom to remarry.

7. Improperly divorced and remarried Christians should stay as they

are, but repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever

amends are necessary.

This is where things get really messy. What if you are in a second or

third marriage that you now realize is sinful? Should you get a

divorce? I dont think so. The principle in - 1 Corinthians

7 - 1 Corinthians 7}, repeated in - verse 17 - 1 Corinthians

7:17}, - 20 - 1 Corinthians 7:20}, and - 24 - 1

Corinthians 7:24}, is remain as you are. God does not want you to

add to the sin of a remarriage the sin of another divorce.

Does this mean those Christians have gotten away with sin? Not at all.

We are never better off for having sinned. There are consequences in

our relationships. There may be consequences in your spiritual life.

And if you look back at your sinful divorce and remarriage and think

Wow, Im glad I didnt know all this ten years ago that is a

dreadful sign that something is very wrong in your heart. If the

Spirit is at work you will not think Phew, I really got away with one

here. Instead you will think, O Lord, I am so sorry. I was ignorant

of the Scriptures. I was blind to my own sin. I have broken your law

and sullied the name of Christ. Please forgive me. Have mercy on us

Lord. And youll not only ask for the Lords forgiveness, youll make

things right with your ex‑spouse, with your kids, your parents, your

in‑lawsyoull make amends and ask for forgiveness with anyone else

you hurt by breaking your marriage vows.

Let me just finish by very briefly addressing three groups of people.

To the married: Stay married. Guard your marriage. Dont think you are

above falling. Dont think you are above temptation. Pray together.

Take walks together. Get away from the kids to be together. There are

few things more precious in life than your marriage. Do not take it

for granted. And if you are contemplating divorce, please talk to

someone. Please dont give up. If you have biblical grounds for

divorce, consider what glory it might be to God to patiently work

toward reconciliation. And if you dont have biblical grounds,

consider what offense it will be to God to break the promises you made

in his name. Consider the harm to your kids. Stay married.

To the divorced and single: If you had grounds for a divorce, the

leaders want to do everything we can to make sure no one looks down on

you. If you have been sinned against, we do not want to treat you as

the sinner. We do not want you to run from the church, but find grace

and fellowship here.

If you are divorced but shouldnt be, can you find hope in your heart

that God might be able to reconcile you and your spouse? It would be a

great trophy of his grace to bring you two back together. If that

doesnt happen, dont get remarried. Dont think you can always repent

later. You never know: the next time you blatantly sin may be the time

the Lord gives you over to the hardness of your heart and puts you

beyond the pale.

To those who have sinfully divorced, to those whose sin caused the

divorce, to those who are now remarried when you shouldnt be: run to

the cross. It is not light thing to tear asunder what God joined

together. It is no small mistake to pursue an adulterous second

marriage. But Gods grace is not light and it is not small. Divorce is

not the unpardonable sin. There is mercy yet for you. But the

contrition must be real, the admission of guilt must be honest, the

repentance must be earnest. A broken heart and a contrite spirit the

Lord will never deny. Run to God. Plead with God. Know his adopting

love. Experience again his justifying free grace. There is a fountain

filled with blood, drawn from Immanuels veins. And sinners plunged

beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.

Kevin DeYoung

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across the street from Michigan State University. He has been the

pastor there since 2004.

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2 Rules for Transparency in the Pulpit by Brady Boyd

Transparency in the Pulpit

- 8/2011.101

Transparency in the Pulpit

2 Rules for Transparency in the Pulpit by Brady Boyd

Newlifeblogs.com/BradyBoyd

"I think it is great when pastors are candid about their own

struggles. But there are times when the pastor can share way too much

information and actually cause people to stumble."Email this

articlePrint FriendlyI think it is great when pastors are candid about

their own struggles. Authenticity builds trust and allows for others

in the fellowship to speak honestly about their own issues. Church

masks are removed, and people are able to get the help they need.

But there are times when the pastor can share way too much information

and actually cause people to stumble. This past Sunday, I shared a

really vulnerable story about my personal struggle with depression

last year. I hope it was helpful, but I was mindful of a couple of

questions we should all consider before we share personal issues.

1. Has the issue been resolved? I am not sure pastors should confess

their struggles publicly until they have at least started the process

of getting some help privately. The Sunday morning stage should not

the be the first time we confess our weaknesses. We need to have a

trusted circle of mature friends who can hear it first, and then we

can talk about it publicly when it is appropriate. Dont be vulnerable

just to be cool. I know many young believers who have given up even

trying to live Godly lives because they believe there is no use trying

if their leaders cannot be victorious. Confess, but then tell them the

path you found toward healing and wholeness. This is encouraging and

will actually build hope in people.

2. Am I about to share something that will embarrass someone? In the

first talk on Sunday when I was telling my story of near depression, I

made it seem that Pam and I were struggling in our marriage, although

the struggle was not with her but with my role as senior pastor. I

made that clearer in the 11:00 AM service, but it reminded me to be

very careful not to reveal something about someone just to tell a cool

story about my messiness. Protect people and their reputations at all

costs, even at the cost of a good sermon illustration.

I hope every leader feels the freedom to be transparent, honest, and

vulnerable. Its refreshing and healing to those who hear, and it

helps all of us take off those silly church masks and live honest

lives filled with hope and freedom.

Brady Boyd

Newlifeblogs.com/BradyBoyd/Brady is the Lead Pastor of New Life Church

in Colorado Springs, CO. He is married to his college sweetheart, Pam

and is the dad to great kids named Abram and Callie. He just wrote a

book called "Fear No Evil" and he's really serious about caring for

the people of Colorado Springs by opening numerous Dream Centers.

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Idea for Your Next Sermon Series - Perry Noble

- 8/2011.101

Idea for Next Sermon Series

Perry Noble: An Amazing Idea for Your Next Sermon Series

Perry Noble

PerryNoble.com

"I honestly believe Ive got the best idea ever for a sermon series in

your churchone that will lead to breakthroughs, one that will be

talked about until Jesus comes back."Email this articlePrint FriendlyI

honestly believe Ive got the best idea EVER for a sermon series in

your churchone that will lead to breakthroughs, one that will be

talked about until Jesus comes back and one that God will use in ways

that will absolutely blow your mind.

Here it is get alone with God, open your Bible, read it until he

sets your heart on fireand then go unleash that fire through

preaching to the people He has called you to preach to!

In other wordsget a word from The Word!

Dont get me wrongI LOVE creative sermon/series planning. I LOVE

trying to figure out how we can communicate timeless principles in the

context of the society that we are in. I LOVE doing WHATEVER it takes

short of sin to get as many people outside the doors of the church to

come inside!

However, the trap that I am seeing so many pastors fall into is they

fall in love with the process of creativity and allow it to bypass the

love they once had for their Creator!

Leadership AND preaching really is as easy as listening to God and

then doing what HE says!

Andlet me be straight, I really do believe that God gives us really

creative ideasand that refusing to use them is simply bad

stewardship.

BUTI also believe that trying to make sure every series that we do

has a certain pop and sizzle is an insane trap that can cause us to

lose focus on what HE has called us to doPREACH HIS WORD! If we are

not careful we can get so creative in our church services that there

really isnt any need for the presence of Godand THAT is the most

ungodly place we could ever lead our people to!

Gods Word WILL produce a harvest (see - Isaiah

55:8‑13 - Isaiah 55:8‑13}, this is a PROMISE)and the BEST way to see a

harvest in the people we preach to is to preach out of the personal

harvest that God is bringing forth in us.

And so when this means going all out and having the most creative set

design, song selection and video that it can havepraise God, I am all

for thatusing WHATEVER we can to communicate His Word.

But then I believe there will be times that we do catch a creative

cramp, and when we do it is probably just God trying to get our

attention and bring us back to rely on HIS SPIRIT rather than our

strategy.

Yes, we are called to be creative (God is NOT boring), but our call to

be that way comes after our call to be obedient.

If God is setting your heart on fireunleash that fire on Sunday!

PREACH!

Perry Noble

PerryNoble.comPerry Noble is the founding and senior pastor of

NewSpring Church in Anderson, Greenville, Columbia, and Florence,

South Carolina. At just nine years old, the church averages over

10,000 people during weekend services. Perry is convicted about

speaking the truth as plainly as possible. A prolific blogger, he's

often a featured speaker at church leadership conferences.

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10 Last Minute Preaching Tips by Toni Ridgaway2

- 8/2011.101

10 Preaching Tips

10 Last Minute Preaching Tips by Toni Ridgaway

ChurchLeaders.com

Read these top ten preaching tips for inspiration and vision before

you preach this Sunday!

As pastors, we must first preach the gospel to ourselves before we

proclaim to the world the necessity of a Savior. How damnable it

would be to die of malnutrition while we busily prepare food for

others.

Scott Thomas

The best advice we ever give is that of a poor sinner to another poor

sinner. As one who looks to herself, lest she also be tempted. As one

who knows he needs to be encouraged as well. As one who doesnt

assume to know anothers heart and pain.

Mark Altrogge

If one wanted to find the biggest problem in Christianity then listen

to the preachers. Whatever most preachers are avoiding in their

sermons. Whatever most preachers are not addressing. Those things are

probably going to be the things that are most needed today.

Sherman Haywood Cox II

Sermons are not made for paper; they are made for people. They are to

be listened to. Just like Ford test‑drives any prototype before they

produce the vehicle, you should test drive your sermon by listening to

it before you preach it.

Mark Mohler

We all know that it is important to know what you are teaching, but it

is becoming even more important to know how they are learning.

Wayne Cordeiro

To help people change, youve got to help them see the lie theyre

basing their behavior on. Thats why when you know the truth, it sets

you free.

Rick Warren

What the world is looking for is an authoritative Gospel spoken

through a humble personality.

P.T. Forsythe

People dont transform because of a good message. They transform

because of a great Jesus.

Pete Wilson

Lectures are a fine way to impart raw information. But it's not enough

to make disciples who make other disciples. Information transfer isn't

enough, we need life transfer. Don't tell me, show me.

Jon Reid

When preachers hold a Bible in their hands, they hold nothing more

than pages of inkPreaching brings the ink of the text alivemakes it

real. The goal of preaching is to hand on an experience of God.

Tom Rogers

Toni Ridgaway

ChurchLeaders.comToni Ridgaway serves as Content Editor for

SermonCentral.com and its sister site, ChurchLeaders.com.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/toni‑r

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10 Creative Ways to Use the Bible in Counseling by Elias Moitinho

- 8/2011.101

10 Ways to Use the Bible in Counseling

10 Creative Ways to Use the Bible in Counseling by Elias Moitinho

LifeWay.com

Even though counseling is neither preaching nor teaching, it does have

elements of both. Here are 10 helpful tips for engaging Scripture in

your counseling sessions.

In - Hebrews 4:12 - Hebrews 4:12}, we read: "For the word of

God is living and effective" (HCSB), and in - Isaiah

55:11 - Isaiah 55:11}, God says: "My word that comes from My mouth will

not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and will

prosper in what I send it [to do]" (HCSB). Therefore, pastors can seek

in the Bible confidently divine principles that deal with the problems

their counselees face.

Where should you start?

You will need to study the Bible passage carefully to discover

biblical principles applicable to the counseling situation at hand.

Even though counseling is neither preaching nor teaching, it does have

elements of both, such as the proclamation of God's truth and the

explanation of God's principles. Consequently, you will need to be

creative in how to use the Bible in each counseling session.

Many methods of using the Bible in counseling exist. You should

determine, with the discernment of the Holy Spirit, which methods to

use in each situation. However, in order to be most effective, you

will need to conduct a thorough spiritual assessment of your

counselee.

Spiritual assessment

Spiritual assessment is an essential part of the evaluation of any

counselee's issues. Therefore, in addition to examining a counselee's

psychological, emotional, and social areas and inquiring about his

physical health, you must conduct a thorough spiritual assessment.

1. Assess your counselee's spiritual condition.

Is your counselee a born‑again Christian?

If not, what is his religious background?

2. Assess your counselee's spiritual maturity.

What kind of Christian is your counselee?

?New believer?

?Immature or infant (Hebrews 5:116:3; - 1 Corinthians 3:1 - 1

Corinthians 3:1 - - Ephesians 4:14 - Ephesians 4:14})?

?Worldly or "of the flesh" ( - 1 Cor. 3:1 - 1 Corinthians 3:1

HCSB)?

?Mature or spiritual ( - 1 Cor. 3:1 - 1 Corinthians 3:1})?

Does he practice spiritual disciplines consistently?

Is he actively involved in a local church?

How much Bible knowledge does he have?

3. Assess your counselee's Bible knowledge and ability to use and

apply Scriptures in his life.

What methodology does he use to study the Bible?

How does he interpret Scriptures and apply them to his life?

Does he have a tendency to misinterpret Scriptures?

What assumptions does he bring to the biblical text?

4. Assess your counselee's openness to spiritual/Biblical

interventions.

Is your counselee receptive to your Biblically‑based counseling?

Is your counselee willing to apply Biblically‑based principles

(interventions and homework assignments) to his life?

5. Choose a Bible passage to address your counselee's issues and study

it in depth.

Use principles of Biblical hermeneutics.

Discover Biblical principles that address his issues.

Here are some creative ways to use the Bible in your counseling

ministry.

10 creative ways to use the Bible in counseling:

1. Read the passage to your counselee and explain it to him.

Describe biblical principles.

Explain how they relate to your counselee's issues.

2. Read the passage to your counselee and ask questions.

Have questions prepared in advance.

Allow time for your counselee to think and respond.

3. Read the passage with your counselee and discuss it together.

Give him time to think. This allows for your counselee's own

insights.

Let your counselee ask questions.

4. Summarize Bible stories to illustrate biblical principles.

Highlight examples in the life of a particular Bible character (e.g.,

you may use the life of Joseph in Egypt to illustrate God's

sovereignty, God's providence, forgiveness, etc.).

Engage your counselee as you share the Bible story.

5. Give your counselee a list of Bible verses that speak to the issue

and then discuss them with him.

Prepare a list of verses that address the issue your counselee

struggles with.

Ask your counselee to read them during the week and discuss his

understanding of those verses in future meetings.

Ask you counselee to identify which verses speak more directly to him

and this issue.

6. Articulate and explain the Biblical teaching/worldview on a

particular issue.

Share the basic Biblical understanding of the issue your counselee is

facing.

Let your counselee respond to the Biblical view.

7. Give activities (homework assignments) that involve Scriptures.

Have your counselee memorize specific Bible verses.

Have your counselee carry cards with specific Bible passages.

Have your counselee study a specific Bible passage and bring his

findings to the next session.

Assist your counselee in coming up with a specific way to apply the

Biblical principle to his life.

8. Engage your counselee in spiritual discussions.

You may ask the counselee to share how he became a Christian.

You may ask the counselee to share about his daily devotions.

Your may ask the counselee to share a passage of Scripture that has

been meaningful and helpful to him.

9. Use Bibliotherapy, Internet articles and devotionals.

Use biblically‑based and theologically‑sound Christian books,

Internet articles and devotional resources to help your counselee

strengthen his faith and develop insights into how to face his issues

from a biblical perspective.

Read the resources before recommending them.

10. Use Christian videos or DVDs.

Recommend biblically‑based and theologically‑sound VHSs, DVDs, and

Internet videos to your counselee to watch and discuss with you in

sessions.

Watch the resources before recommending them.

Elias Moitinho

LifeWay.comElias Moitinho, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Psychology

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5 Facts about First‑Time Guests by Rick Ezell

Five Significant Facts about First‑Time Guests by Rick Ezell

RickEzell.net

- 8/2011.101

Preaching

5 Facts about First‑Time Guests

Five Significant Facts about First‑Time Guests by Rick Ezell

RickEzell.net

You may be the most skilled preacher and your church may have

excellent small groups or the best childrens ministry in the city,

but your first‑time guests will never know unless they make a second

or third visit.

Healthy and growing churches pay close attention to the people they

count as members, as well as those people who are not yet a part of

the flock. These churches know that new people are the lifeblood of a

growing church. Like a spigot, they want to keep the valve open for

the flow of new people, and most importantly, they want to ensure that

nothing impairs or cuts off the flow of new people to the church.

With that in mind, pastors need to be aware of five significant facts

about first‑time guests looking for a church home.

1. Visitors make up their minds regarding a new church in the first

ten minutes of their visit.

Often, before a first‑time guest has sung an inspiring song or watched

a compelling drama or viewed a well‑produced video vignette or heard a

well‑crafted sermon, they have made up their mind whether or not to

return. In fact, if you ask most church leaders, far more time and

energy are spent on the plan and execution of the worship service,

with only minimal time spent on preparing for the greeting and

welcoming of the first‑time guest, which is equally if not more

important. Most pastors would rather not hear this: The churchs

ability to connect with first‑time guests is not dependent on you, but

on those first lines of people who represent your church.

Are parking attendants in place?

Is there appropriate signage?

Are your ushers and greeters performing the right job?

Is the environment you take for granted user‑friendly and accepting

to guests?

2. Most church members arent friendly.

Churches claim to be friendly. In fact, many churches put that

expression in their logo or tag line. But my experience in visiting

churches as a first‑time guest proves otherwise. The truth is that

most church members are friendly to the people they already know, but

not to guests.

Observe to see if your members greet guests with the same intensity

and concern before and after the worship service as they do during a

formal time of greeting in the worship service. A lack of friendliness

before and after the service sends a mixed, if not hypocritical,

message to new people.

The six most important minutes of a church service, in a visitors

eyes, are the three minutes before the service and the three minutes

after the service, when church members introduce themselves, seeking

genuinely to get to know the visitors (not just obtain personal

information like the market research data collectors at the mall),

offer to answer any questions, introduce them to others who may have a

connection (perhaps they live in the same neighborhood, are from the

same hometown or state, or their children attend the same school), or

any number of ways to demonstrate to the visitors that they as a

church member care.

A church would be wise to discover their most gregarious and

welcoming members and deploy them as unofficial greeters before and

after each service, in addition to designated parking‑lot greeters,

door greeters, ushers, and informational booth personnel.

Dont make promises the church cant keep. My wife attended a church

recently that calls itself The Friendly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church, but

no one spoke to her before the service and when she sought information

from the guest information booth she was treated by the attendant as a

bother. Mixed messages and unfulfilled promises do great harm in a

churchs effectiveness in welcoming new people.

3. Church guests are highly consumer‑oriented.

If Target doesnt have what I need, I just head to K‑Mart. If the

Delta airfare is too high, American might have a sale. Capitalism has

taught us that if we dont find what we want, someone else down the

street or at another web site will have it. If your church building is

too hard for newcomers to navigate, if they have to park in the back

40, if your people are unaccepting and unfriendly, another church

down the street may have what theyre looking for. Or worse yet, they

may decide getting into a church is not worth the effort and give up

their search altogether.

Pastors and church leaders need to look at their churches through the

eyes of a first‑time guest. Rick Warren says that the longer a pastor

has been a pastor, the less he thinks like a non‑pastor. That same

thought would apply to thinking like a guest.

The use of objective, yet trained, anonymous guests to give an honest

appraisal is very important. Many retail outlets utilize the service

of one or more mystery guests to provide helpful analysis of

welcoming and responding to the consumer. Churches would be well

served to utilize a similar service.

4. The church is in the hospitality business.

Though our ultimate purpose is spiritual, one of our first steps in

the Kingdom business is attention to hospitality. Imagine the service

that would be given to you in a first‑class hotel or a five‑star

restaurant. Should the church offer anything less to those who have

made the great effort to be our guests?

Hospitality is almost a forgotten virtue in our society. When was the

last time someone invited you to their home for a meal? But it needs

to be reawakened.

Church members can extend hospitality to guests by offering to sit

with them during the church service, giving them a tour of the church

facilities, inviting them to lunch after service, or connecting with

them later in the week.

5. You only have one chance to make a good first impression.

More than a truism, first impressions are lasting ones. Little hope of

correcting a bad first impression is possible. Your first‑time guests

have some simple desires and basic needs. They decide very quickly if

you can meet those criteria. The decision to return for a second visit

is often made before guests reach your front door.

Are you creating the entire experience, beginning with your parking

lot?

Are you consciously working to remove barriers that make it difficult

for guests to find their way around and to feel at home with your

people?

Do newcomers have all the information they need without having to ask

any embarrassing questions?

Are your greeters and ushers on the job, attending to details and

anticipating needs before they are expressed?

Does anything about your guests first experience make them say,

Wow! and want to return?

You may be the most skilled preacher and your church may have

excellent small groups or the best childrens ministry in the city.

Your first‑time guests will never know unless they make a second or

third visit. Will they come back? It all depends on the impression you

re making. Make it the right one the first time.

Copyright 2006, Rick Ezell.

Rick Ezell

RickEzell.netRick Ezell is the pastor at First Baptist Church in

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1,000 Sermons Will Change Your Life - Trevin Wax ‑ TrevinWax.com

- 8/2011.101

1,000 Sermons Will Change Your Life

Trevin Wax ‑ TrevinWax.com

Pastors, dont underestimate the cumulative effect of your preaching.

You are not dumping information into brains. You are forming the

habits of your people, teaching them how to read and understand and

apply the Bible for themselves.Email this articlePrint FriendlyMaking

a hospital visit to a suffering family makes more of an impact than

the three points you made in your message on Sunday.

Occasionally, I hear statements like this at pastors conferences and

preaching seminars. The idea? Pastoral presence is more important than

a pastors preaching. The implication? Its better to spend less time

worrying about your preaching and more time engaging people at a

personal level.

Sounds good. But its shortsighted. And ultimately unhelpful.

Sure, there are pastors who spend all day in the study and never among

the people. Those kinds of pastors need to be prodded out the door so

they can better serve the flock. (Not to mention that being with the

flock greatly enhances your preaching!)

Its also true that most of your congregation already forgot the main

points from your sermon last week. And yes, church members will long

remember your presence during their time of crisis. But the point of

your preaching isnt that everyone will remember all the information

you present anyway. Neither should preaching preparation be forgotten

in the attempt to increase ones pastoral presence.

No, instead we need to consider the relationship between preaching and

presence in a way that measures impact beyond what is immediate,

powerful, and memorable. Thats why I say: Do not downplay the

long‑term, cumulative effect of your preaching.

Preaching is formative in ways that go beyond mere information

retention. Every time a pastor opens up the Word and preaches the

gospel, he is showing his church how to approach the Bible. Pastors

who elevate the Scriptures week after week, sermon after sermon, lead

their people to approach the Bible in the same way.

A Personal Example

From the time I was nine years old until I left for Romania at the age

of 19, I belonged to a church where the pastor (Ken Polk) preached

expository sermons every week. I remember the first (and second) time

he took us through the Gospel of John. I still remember his 1

Corinthians series, or his sermons from Judges.

Of course, this pastor was also by our side when we had our first

child. He has comforted us amidst trial and loss. He is a pastor,

after all, not just a preacher. But, I dare say, his Word‑centeredness

as a preacher is what made his pastoral presence so powerful during

our time of trial. His presence was enhanced by his preaching.

I cannot calculate the formative influence that this pastors

preaching has had on my life. For ten years, I listened to Bro. Ken

preach. 10 years. 50 weeks a year. 2 times a week. Thats 1,000

sermons.

No, I dont remember the information contained in the vast majority of

those sermons. I dont remember all the titles or the points. But I

have no doubt that his preaching has greatly impacted my life.

I approach the text the way he does, looking to discover whats

there, not invent whats not.

I see Christ in the Scriptures because he saw Christ there.

I respect the Bible because of the way he always made the purpose of

the text more prominent than the personality of the messenger.

We are on the same page theologically because he consistently

preached a theology that came from the page.

An Exhortation to Pastors

Pastors, dont underestimate the cumulative effect of your preaching.

You are not dumping information into brains. You are forming the

habits of your people, teaching them how to read and understand and

apply the Bible for themselves. How you preach week after week matters

just as much as what you preach.

Weekly confrontation with the Word of God slowly changes how we look

at the world. We see God more clearly, our human state, and the future

of the world within the Bibles framework, even if we dont remember

all the information in an individual message. Sermons gradually change

the way we think and feel and believe and hope.

Yes, your presence at the funeral home and the hospital bed is vital.

It matters greatly. But theres a reason why your presence during

suffering is so powerful: The Word. A pastors visit is unique because

the pastor is the one who speaks authoritatively from Gods Word week

in and week out. Thats why Christians want their pastor to be by

their side, and not just a fellow church member.

So lets not pit pastoral presence against sermon preparation. Your

preaching influences your presence, and vice versa. May the Lord open

our eyes to see the quiet, subtle influence that 1000 sermons have on

the people God has entrusted to our care.

Trevin Wax

TrevinWax.comTrevin Wax is first and foremost a follower of Jesus

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Preaching Tip to Encourage Your Audience Peter Mead

- 8/2011.101

Encourage Your Audience

Preaching Tip: Encourage Your Audience

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net

Everyone needs encouragement. And yet, strangely, it's often absent

from a significant amount of preaching. Email this articlePrint

FriendlyEveryone needs encouragement. We need it as preachers. So we

shouldnt be surprised if our listeners do, too! And yet, strangely,

something that everyone needs, and everyone acknowledges is needed,

seems to be strangely absent in a significant amount of preaching.

Let me encourage you to encourage people as you preach.

Dont think exhortation is encouragement.

There is a need for exhortation, but people need to be encouraged,

too. Exhorting involves persuasion and a hint of rebuke, but

encouragement injects hope, confidence and life.

Dont think guilt is encouragement.

To put it simply, it is not. Guilting people into conformity is a

shortcut that may yield results, but it will be short‑lived and

counter‑productive. Allow guilt to come by the conviction of the

Spirit, but dont add guilt where guilt is not the issuethat is a

form of legalism.

Dont think that enthusiasm is encouragement.

Your enthusiasm may be contagious, but people may sit impressed by

your passion, yet not feel encouraged in their own. Think through how

to invest rather than simply demonstrate enthusiasm in your preaching.

There are other things we may offer and think we are being

encouraging. But consider both your passage and your listeners: how

can this be preached in a way that will encourage them? Robinson

talks about the need for ten encouraging messages for every one

rebuke. It is so counterproductive when we get that ratio reversed.

Be encouraged as you read the Word, and look to share that

encouragement as encouragement!

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Has Mission Become Our Idol? Skye Jethani

- 8/2011.101

Has Mission Become Our Idol?

Skye Jethani

SkyeJethani.com

Skye Jethani: "While a vision for serving God is needed, and the

desperate condition of our world cannot be ignored, there is a higher

calling that is going unanswered in many Christian communities." Email

this articlePrint FriendlyThere is a first‑rate commitment to a

second‑rate mission. That is what Roger, a leader in global church

planting, said as he looked at the rock climbers ascending a cliff in

the Alps. Many of us called into ministry feel the same way. Rather

than giving our lives to climbing a rock, building a business, or

amassing a fortune, we are committed to what really matters; a

first‑rate mission‑‑advancing the Gospel and the Church of Jesus

Christ.

But what if were wrong?

Roger spent decades serving Christ and planting churches on four

continents. But after reflecting on his labor for the kingdom of God,

his confession surprised many of us. Ive given most of my energy to

a second‑rate mission as well, he said. Dont get me wrong. Church

planting is great. But someday that mission will end. My first calling

is to live with God. That must be my first commitment.

What Roger articulated was a temptation that many in ministry face.

To put it simply, many church leaders unknowingly replace the

transcendent vitality of a life with God for the ego satisfaction they

derive from a life for God. Before exploring how this shift occurs in

church leaders, let me take a step or two backwards and explain how I

have seen it within the Christian college students Ive worked with in

recent years.

Is impact everything?

The students I meet with often worry about what awaits them after

graduation. This is a reasonable concern for any young adult, but for

many of them the worry extends far beyond finding a job with benefits.

They fixate, and some obsess, about making a difference in the

world. They fear living lives of insignificance. They worry about not

achieving the right things, or not enough of the right things. Behind

all of this is the belief that their value is determined by what they

achieve. Ive learned that when a student asks me, What should I do

with my life? what he or she really wants to know is, How can I

prove that I am valuable?

When we come to believe that our faith is primarily about what we can

do for God in the world, it is like throwing gasoline on our fear of

insignificance. The resulting fire may be presented to others as a

godly ambition, a holy desire to see Gods mission advance‑‑the kind

of drive evident in the Apostle Pauls life. But when these flames are

fueled by fear they reveal none of the peace, joy, or love displayed

by Paul. Instead the relentless drive to prove our worth can quickly

become destructive.

Sometimes the people who fear insignificance the most are driven to

accomplish the greatest things. As a result they are highly praised

within Christian communities for their good works which temporarily

soothes their fear until the next goal can be achieved. But there is a

dark side to this drivenness. Gordon MacDonald calls it

missionalism. It is the belief that the worth of ones life is

determined by the achievement of a grand objective. He continues:

Missionalism starts slowly and gains a foothold in the leader's

attitude. Before long the mission controls almost everything: time,

relationships, health, spiritual depth, ethics, and convictions. In

advanced stages, missionalism means doing whatever it takes to solve

the problem. In its worst iteration, the end always justifies the

means. The family goes; health is sacrificed; integrity is

jeopardized; God‑connection is limited.[1]

What I have witnessed in the lives of many college students is the

early symptoms of missionalism. The virus had been introduced to them

in childhood and incubated by well‑intentioned churches, ministries,

schools, and the wider evangelical subculture. And with graduation

looming the students were feeling the pressure. It was, after all,

their first opportunity to actually prove their worth through

achievement.

When meeting with or counseling a struggling church leader, one of the

questions Ill ask to diagnose whether missionalism is present is:

Assuming youre not engaged in some kind of disqualifying sin, why

not? The answer I often hear, the answer most posters have been

conditioned to say, is: I wouldnt want to do anything to jeopardize

my ministry. That response often reveals where a leaders true

devotion is. Sadly I rarely hear a pastor say, I wouldnt want

anything to disrupt my communion with God. So few of us have been

given a vision of a life with Christ, and instead we seek to fill the

void with a vision for ministry‑‑a vision of a life for Christ.

Phil Vischer, the creator of VeggieTales, was raised in a life for

God environment. His experience reveals how the fear of being

insignificant is implanted into young people. He said the heroes his

community celebrated were the Rockefellers of the Christian world;

those who were enterprising, effective, and who made a huge impact for

God. They launched massive ministries or transformed whole nations.

This led Vischer to conclude that impact was everything. God would

never call us from greater impact to lesser impact!, he wrote. How

many kids did you invite to Sunday? How many souls have you won? How

big is your church? How many people will be in heaven because of your

efforts? Impact, man![2]

But after losing his company in 2003, Vischer began to question the

validity of the life for God values he had inherited and which had

driven his early career.

The more I dove into Scripture, the more I realized I had been

deluded. I had grown up drinking a dangerous cocktaila mix of the

gospel, the Protestant work ethic, and the American dream. The Savior

I was following seemed, in hindsight, equal parts Jesus, Ben Franklin,

and Henry Ford. My eternal value was rooted in what I could accomplish

[3]

A professional crisis made Vischer pause and reexamine his posture

with God, but for others the nagging discontent of a life lived for

God manifests much more slowly. Consider what one pastor in his late

30s wrote: "The church is growing, and there's excitement everywhere.

But personally I feel less and less good about what I'm doing. I'm

restless and tired. I ask myself how long I can keep this all up. Why

is my touch with God so limited? Why am I feeling guilty about where

my marriage is? When did this stop being fun?"[4] This leader is not

alone. Studies show that approximately 1,500 pastors leave the

ministry every month due to conflict, burnout, or moral failure.[5]

Others have shown how ministry rooted relentless achievement for God

actually contributes to addictive behaviors. When the accolades that

give pastors a sense of significance cease or never come at all, some

begin to nurse secret pleasures on the side to numb their pain.

When church leaders function from this understanding of the Christian

life, they invariably transfer their burden and fears to those in the

pews. If a pastors sense of worth is linked to the impact of his or

her ministry, guess what believers under that pastors care are told

is most important? And so a new generation of people who believe their

value is linked to their accomplishments is birthed. If the cycle

continues long enough an institutional memory is created in which the

value of achievement for God is no longer questioned. Leaders may be

burning out at a rate of 1,500 per month, young people may be riddled

with anxiety, and divorce rates in the church may be rising and

families falling apart, but no one stops. No one asks whether this is

really what God intended the Christian life to be. No one asks, at

least out loud, because that might slow things down. Remember, the

work must go on. Impact, man!

Mission is good, not ultimate.

You may be thinking, But we are called to do things for God. And what

s the alternative‑‑continuing to allow the people in our churches to

be self‑consumed Christians seeking only their own comfort? That is a

very fair concern. And I completely concur with the consumer posture

that is choking much of the modern church both in North American and

increasingly around the globe.

But the prescribed solution I hear in many ministry settings is to

transform people from consumer Christians into activist Christians.

The exact direction of the activism may depend on ones theological

and ecclesiological orientation. For traditional evangelicals its all

about evangelism‑‑getting believers to share their faith, give to

overseas missions, and grow the church. For many younger evangelicals

it may focus compassion and justice‑‑digging wells and eradicating

poverty. But what the traditional and younger evangelicals agree upon

is that we are to live our lives for God by accomplishing his mission

however we may define it.

The life for God view makes mission the irreducible center of the

Christian life. And everything and everyone gets defined by some great

goal understood to be initiated by God and carried forward by us. An

individual is either on the mission, the object of the mission, an

obstacle to the mission, an aid to the mission, or a fat Christian who

should be on the mission.

Please dont think I am trying to dismiss the importance of the missio

dei or the churchs part within it. Like other church leaders, I

greatly desire to see more Christians hear Gods call and engage in

the good and life‑saving work he has given us. And I am incredibly

grateful for my friends in ministry who have awakened the church to

the theological and practical necessity of mission in our age. But as

Tim Keller has deftly observed, An idol is a good thing made into an

ultimate thing. The temptation within activist streams of

Christianity is to put the good mission of God into the place God

alone should occupy. The irony is that in our desire to draw people

away from the selfishness of consumer Christianity, we may simply be

replacing one idol with another. This is the great danger of endlessly

extolling the importance of living for God‑‑it put can place Gods

mission ahead of God himself. Paul, the most celebrated missionary in

history, did not make this mistake. He understood that his calling, to

be a messenger to the gentiles, was not the same as his treasure, to

be united with Christ. His communion with Christ rooted and preceded

his work for him.

Few passages of Scripture illustrate our present dilemma better than

the Parable of the Prodigal Son in - Luke 15 - Luke 15}. If

you recall, the young son did not value a relationship with his father

but only his fathers wealth‑‑a poignant example of the consumer

Christian. He took what his father gave him, left home, and wasted the

gifts on fast living. Eventually he was penniless and desperate. But

when the son returned home to seek his fathers mercy and a job as a

servant, he was astonished to find his father overjoyed‑‑running to

embrace him with open arms.

But thats only half of the story. The father also had an older son

who was very different than his swinging sibling. He was reliable,

obedient, and lived to do his fathers bidding. But when the older son

heard that his wayward brother had returned, and that his father had

welcomed him and was throwing a party, he became incensed. In fact,

when he heard the music and dancing in the house he refused to join

the celebration. Instead he held his own pity party out in the field.

True to his character, when the father discovered that his eldest son

was not home he went out to find him. There the father begged the

older son to come to the party. But the son was furious. Look, all

these years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet

you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my

friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your

property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!

( - Luke 15:29‑30 - Luke 15:29‑30}).

Notice where the older son roots his significance: All these years I

have served you, and I never disobeyed your command. The older son

lived for his father. And for his service he expected a reward. In

this way he really is not that different from the younger son. Neither

boy was particularly interested in a relationship with the father,

instead both were focused on what they might get from him. The younger

son simply took what he desired while the older son, being a more

patient and self‑disciplined person, worked for it. Their methods were

night and day, but both sons desired the same thing and in neither

case was it the father. In other words, both sons sought to use their

father. Both were jerks, one just happened to be of a more

socially‑acceptable variety.

Jesus told this parable at a gathering with Pharisees and

scribes‑‑very devoted religious leaders; men who drew a great deal of

significance from their service for God. Was Jesus trying to say to

them that there is something wrong with serving God or faithful

obedience? Of course not. The problem comes when we find our

significance and worth in it. Jesus is not diminishing the older sons

obedience, just as he is not endorsing the younger sons immorality.

Rather he is showing that both a life from God (the younger son) and

a life for God (the older son) fail to capture what God truly

desires for his people. Pouring our lives into a mission that we

believe pleases God is not the center of the Christian life. It is not

what is going to remove our fears or unbind our captivity to sin. In

order to discover what God cares about most, we must look more closely

at the fathers response to the older son in Jesus story.

Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was

fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this brother of yours was dead,

and is alive; he was lost, and is found ( - Luke

15:31‑32 - Luke 15:31‑32}).

What brought the father joy was not the older sons service, but

simply his presence‑‑having his son with him. This is what the father

cares about most, not his property or which son receives more of it.

While the sons are fixated on the fathers wealth, the father is

fixated on his sons. This is what they both failed to understand, and

it is what both Christian consumerism and Christian activism fail to

grasp. Gods gifts are a blessing and his work is important, but

neither can or should replace God himself as our focus.

Like the younger son, believers in our churches often build their

identity around what they receive from God. Or like the older son we

find our value in how we serve God. And a great deal of effort is

expended in faith communities trying to transform people from younger

sons into older sons. But this is a fools errand. Because what

mattered most to the father was neither the younger sons disobedience

nor the older sons obedience, but having his sons with him. And so it

is with our Heavenly Father. Reversing the rebellion of Eden and

restoring what was lost can only be accomplished when we learn that at

the center of Gods heart is having his children with him.

While a vision for serving God is needed, and the desperate condition

of our world cannot be ignored, there is a higher calling that is

going unanswered in many Christian communities. As shepherds of Gods

people, we must not allow our fears of insignificance to drive us into

an unrelenting pursuit of church growth, cultural impact, or missional

activism. Instead, we must model for our people a first‑class

commitment to a first‑class purpose‑‑living in perpetual communion

with God himself. As we embrace the call to live with God, only then

will we be capable of illuminating such a life for our people.

Skye Jethani

SkyeJethani.comSkye Jethani is the senior editor of Leadership Journal

and the author of With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God.

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Preaching on the Edge of Laughter - Wayne Cordeiro

- 8/2011.101

Preaching and Laughter

Wayne Cordeiro: Preaching on the Edge of Laughter

Wayne Cordeiro

MentoringLeaders.com

"Congregations that never laugh find that forgiveness comes hard. In a

church that laughs easily, forgiveness also comes easily. Allow your

spirit to be lifted by laughter. It will do more than just improve

your communication, it will change your church."Email this

articlePrint FriendlyEnvision that life is like a large, flat plain.

At its edge is laughter, where life giggles and belly laughs without

much effort. This is called the Edge of Laughter.

A lot of people build their lives too far from the Edge of Laughter.

So it takes someone to do the best comedy act in Vegas to get them to

crack a smile.

Live on the Edge of Laughter. Congregations that never laugh find that

forgiveness comes hard. In a church that laughs easily, forgiveness

also comes easily. Allow your spirit to be lifted by laughter. It will

do more than just improve your communication, it will change your

church.

Humor of Jesus

Jesus laughed. Where you might ask? Plenty of places in the Gospels if

you have any kind of funny bone left in your body. Listen to these

words of Jesus:

Its easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than rich

man to get into heaven ( - Matthew 19:24 - Matthew 19:24}).

How do you get a camel through the eye of a needle? Do you start with

the tail and start pulling him through? Of course people laughed.

Jesus wanted them to, so they would not take themselves too seriously.

As ambassadors of the King, you and I must also utilize humor to

awaken peoples minds and hearts.

When people laugh, it reboots their computer and gets them thinking

again. Have you ever experienced a computer crash? You wiggle the

mouse, tap at the keys, maybe even kick it, but it doesnt react.

Well, that can happen during speeches too! You must jiggle your

audience awake with joy.

When people laugh it opens their receptivity. As their mouths hang

open, the preacher can drop in truth for them to chew on. What a

preacher says immediately after the laughter is the most important

message he can speak. Laughter makes hearts vulnerable and the words

he will speak will sink deeply and be reflected upon.

How can a preacher develop his humor?

1. Watch Life

Watch life for unique experiences. Develop eyes to see humor every

day. How much life goes by and we are oblivious to it. I went to a

collegiate game where the University of Oregon played UCLA. The people

were wonderfully alive and sparkling with joy. They had painted their

faces and their bodies! They wore clown wigs and just went nuts. It

was such a joy to watch them!

2. Watch Comedy

One of the best tactics for developing humor is from some of the most

funny people in the world, stage comedians. A comedian will plan his

routine, crafting his lines and adjusting his timing. These are the

professionals of laughter. If their humor is clean, watch it and take

notes! Watch every gesture, tone and technique they use to draw

laughter out of people around them.

3. Practice Laughing

Right where you are, wherever you are, laugh! Thats right, laugh. Yes

I do mean you! Dont hide behind your screen. Just laugh.

You may need some practice. We need to practice joy so that it becomes

a natural reflex in life, not just in the pulpit but every day we

live.

If we dont laugh well be more painful to live with. Those who dont

laugh are often the first critics. If you dont laugh very much, it

does not mean that you are holier than others. It might make you a

Pharisee but it will not make you holier. Somewhere along the line,

church people began to look like they had been baptized in lemon

juice. We have become known for our deep‑furrowed frowns. Holiness is

not best advertised with seriousness but with joy.

One of the first Sundays after we planted New Hope a somber man

sporting a scowl and crossed arms glared through me during the

service. So I went over to him and gave him a big hug and said, Good

morning! He was as rigid as a phone pole. He scalded me with a look

that could blister skin. In a low growl he said, If you would stop

being such a funny guy, and just preach the Word, then maybe Id come

more often! He left that Sunday and we havent seen him since.

In those early days we only had a handful of people attending. But

since then 34,000 people have made first‑time decisions for Christ

through New Hope . Were going to keep laughing! As Nehemiah said,

The joy of the Lord is your strength ( - Neh. 8:10 - Nehemiah

8:10}). A church that understands the joy of the Lord is a strong

church.

Wayne Cordeiro

MentoringLeaders.comWayne Cordeiro is the founding pastor of New Hope

Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, Hawaii with over 14,500 in weekend

attendance. New Hope is also listed as one of the top ten most

innovative churches in America with Outreach magazine, listing them as

one of the top five churches to learn from. New Hope is known for

redeeming the arts and technology. Over 3000 attend services each

week via the Internet, and New Hope has seen over 73,000 first‑time

decisions in Hawaii since its inception 26 years ago.

He has authored ten books, including such classics as Doing Church as

a Team, Dream Releasers, Seven Rules of Success, Attitudes That

Attract Success, Divine Mentor, Leading on Empty and The Encore

Church. Wayne is also the author of the Life Journal, which is being

used by thousands of churches worldwide, is bringing people back to

the Word of God.

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Preaching on Life: An Interview with Max Lucado - Michael Duduit

- 8/2011.101

Preaching magazine

"I really believe the purpose of Scripture is to give us this

authoritative handbook. We have a place where we can take people when

they come to us with questions so we're not just speaking out of our

own opinion." Email this articlePrint FriendlyMax Lucado is one of

America's best‑known preachers. He is the minister of preaching at Oak

Hills Church in San Antonio. His books have sold more than 80 million

copies, and his latest volume is Max On Life: Answers and Insights to

Your Most Important Questions. He recently visited with Preaching

Executive Editor Michael Duduit.

Preaching: Your newest book, Max on Life, is a series of questions and

answers dealing with different themes. Tell me what led you to use

this approach?

Lucado: I think you could say every pastor is writing this book; for

many it just never gets published. All I did was collect a few of the

questions I've been asked through the years, write up a brief response

and put them in this publication. As a pastor, you get asked questions

and receive emails. Many of them I had answered, but just in

conversation. So we kind of re‑crafted the question and answered it.

It turned out to be an interesting exercise. I hope it's encouraging

for people.

I've never really prided myself as being quick on my feet. Maybe

you've had the experience where somebody's asked you a question and

you give an answer, then later in the day you think, "Oh, I wish I'd

said that!" I tend to journal these things and put the answers in

sermons. It was a matter of going back through a lot of sermons and

remembering the questions and conversations, where these ideas came

from. So the book is really kind of a second chance to answer these

questions.

Preaching: What was the hardest question?

Lucado: I think the hardest one had to do with suffering. It had to do

with all of our church members and friends passing through difficult

times. Sometimes it's the global climate: tsunamis, earthquakes,

radiation. I think these kinds of questions are absolutely the most

difficult, yet we need to be ready to respond to them because we have

to be able as pastors to walk people through these valleys, these

tough times in their lives.

Preaching: Do you have a favorite question in the book?

Lucado: No one has asked me that. I never thought whether there's a

favorite one. I think there is, not in the sense that I enjoy it, but

that it's an important question. It's the question, "Does the presence

of pain mean God doesn't care? Does God not love me anymore?" I think

that's a very common connection we tend to make. I see that a lot in

my own life and in the lives of others.Does the presence of pain mean

the absence of God? I try to help people see that God uses pain, that

pain is one of the ways God shapes us into the kind of beings He wants

us to be for eternity. I don't know how to answer the problem of deep

pain without a deep hope in eternity. If the purpose of life is just

to live this life and then die, it's hard to answer the purpose of

pain question; but if we can help people see from an eternal

perspectivethat all of this is working together to prepare us for

something higher than we've ever imagined, more noble than we've ever

dreamedthen we discover some hope that we can hold on to.

Preaching: This book is divided into seven topical sections: hope,

hurt, help, him or her, home, haves, have‑nots and hereafter. That's a

pretty good list for a balanced preaching ministry. Those are issues

Scripture deals with and issues that are on the minds of people today.

Lucado: If you could have seen me last summer putting this together

with stacks of questions! I spent the better part of a week trying to

figure out how to organize these stacks of 30 years of conversations

and dialogues. I finally began clustering them in these different

categories, and I ended up with the ones you listed.It's interesting

to me the kinds of questions I haven't been called to wrestle with.

For example, I don't know what this says, but I'm not asked a lot of

political questions. I don't get asked a lot of questions about

science and the Bible, for example. Probably people just know I'm not

very smart and I don't have an answer to those anyway. I don't get

asked a lot of questions about who is the best political candidate or

what my position is on what the Senate is about to do. From my

perspective, most of my life has been dealing with the day‑to‑day,

kitchen‑to‑bedroom‑to‑living‑room‑to‑garage life with people. Most

people are just trying to figure out how to love the people in their

world, to love their God and to deal with some of these questions

about God.

Preaching: As we preach, we seek to take Scripture and apply it to the

real life needs of people. Sermon application seems to be one of the

areas in which many pastors struggle the most. How do you approach

application as you prepare to preach?

Lucado: I really believe the purpose of Scripture is to give us this

authoritative handbook. We have a place where we can take people when

they come to us with questions so we're not just speaking out of our

own opinion. We're really speaking to them out of an authoritative

place, not because of what we discovered, but because of what God

says. You know, it's one thing for me to tell people not to worry.

It's another thing entirely to quote - Matthew 6 - Matthew 6},

where Jesus says, "Why do you worry? The birds of the air, the flowers

of the field" He says, "I tell you, do not worry." So, when we speak

from that perspective, the comfort carries with it a higher level, a

deeper sense of magnitude.The second part of this is the Holy Spirit

uses the Scripture as a sword. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. So

the Holy Spirit uses Scripture, uses the Bible to penetrate people's

hearts. So, every time we equip the church with a verse, chapter or a

story from the Bible, we're really placing another weapon in the hands

of the Holy Spirit that He uses to challenge and strengthen the

church. I think that's very important.The temptation is for us to

share our own opinions, our own thoughts and to speak from the whole

realm of possibility. We can't do that as pastors. We need to have a

strong voice of conviction, and the way we can do that is through

Scripture.

Preaching: As you go through the process of preparing a message, at

what point does application begin to come into that mix?

Lucado: In the first paragraph. To me it does. I'm thinking, "What

difference will this sermon make in their lives tomorrow? What am I

trying to give them that will make a difference?"The sermon I preached

this past weekend, for example, had to do with the theme that Jesus

will not let go of you. He will not let go of you. He's holding onto

you. I talked to them about the disciples and Peter on the night

before the crucifixion of Christhow Jesus said that all of you are

going to turn away, but He would be waiting for them in Galilee. I try

to help people see they're going to have these times in which they

turn away, in which they deny Christ and their faith grows cold, their

convictions weakened; but Jesus is waiting. It's not our hold on Him,

but His hold on us.

So immediately I'm trying to think: What are some of these times when

we feel we're losing our hold on Christ, and what's the fear we're

trying to address? I try to get into that quickly. I don't have a lot

of time in the sermon anyway. The sermon is only 25 minutes, which to

me is frighteningly short. So I feel as if I need to get into that

pretty quickly and make it as practical and accessible as possible.

Preaching: You've been writing for 25 years and preaching longer than

that. Have you found that your approach to application has changed

through the years?

Lucado: I don't think so. I think I could do better in my approach to

application. I think I could do better in preaching practical sermons.

Most of my sermons are inspirational, and I believe people need that

encouragement. I have some friends whose sermons are extremely

practicalso practical that I can put them right to use. I'm trying to

learn how to do that better; but I don't think my approach or style

really has changed in these 30 years. Whether that's good or bad I

don't know, but I don't think it has.

Preaching: How do you decide what you are going to be preaching? I

know you preach in series. How far out are you planning those?

Lucado: I'm trying to decide right now. In March 2011 I'm trying to

decide on a sermon series that I will preach in January 2012. So, I'm

about six months out. I'm right now wrapping up the sermon series on

grace. I'd like to figure out what this next series will be in

January. To do that, I'm going to come up with four or five really

good ideasat least that I think are really good ideasand if I don't

sense God really highlighting one of those, I will go to the elders of

our church and my co‑pastors. I'll give them a nugget of each of

thesea brief description of each of the sermon series. I'll say, "Do

you sense one of these over the other?" and see what they tell me.

Usually between my thoughts and theirs, an idea surfaces that I really

feel good about.

Preaching: So you're planning a good many months out. When you

actually start the process of writing the message for a particular

Sunday, how far out do you start?

Lucado: About three weeks out, I try to map the whole series. Right

now I'm doing a series called, "What Happens When Grace Happens?" It's

a 13‑week series. Last summer, I went away for a couple of weeks and

pretty well mapped out the big points of each message. Then I put it

on the shelf, and about a month out I started preparing the messages.

Usually I'm able to prepare a message about two to three weeks in

advance.I know some preachers don't like that. They want to be

finishing it on Friday before they preach it on Sunday, but our

worship team really likes me to get it done way in advance. So does

our graphics team. We're also a multi‑site church, so we have other

pastors on other campuses who want to read the message before the

video plays on the weekend services. So it just works better for me.

I co‑pastor now, so I preach six months, then another guy preaches six

months. So that's really why I'm preparing for January, because I'll

finish in June; then I'll be writing and doing other projects for the

rest of the year. That started about three years ago. So it's not like

I'm that far in advance; it's just that it's my next time up. It used

to be that I would be planning the September sermon series.

Preaching: As you were planning your current series on grace, did you

start with themes or topics first? Do you begin with some biblical

texts on grace? What's your approach to developing a series like that?

Lucado: What I try to do is narrow the sermon series down to one big

question. In this case the question is: What happens when grace

happens? I knew I wanted to preach about grace. I just felt as if it

was time for our church to be refreshed and see the beauty of God's

gracethe uniqueness of the Christian grace as compared to the

teachings of other world religions on forgiveness. I think we have

such a crown jewel in the forgiveness of God, and it changes people's

lives.I wanted to talk about how grace in and of itself changes us. It

changes the way we treat other people, the way we view our lives, the

way we treat our purpose and our eternal identity. It took me a long

time to narrow it down to that one question, but I felt very good

about that question: What happens when grace happens? So for the past

10 or 11 weeks, each week I've unpacked that.I'm just like other

pastors. I want a real take‑home quality to the sermon, so I built the

whole sermon series around the word grace, those five letters. We have

up on our platform big cubes that spell G‑R‑A‑C‑E. Five cubeskind of

like dice that come up to my waist. So I'll stand behind the G and

remind people first that grace is a gift. Then I move to the R and

talk about how grace is redemption; to the A, how grace is acceptance;

to the C, how grace turns us into Christians, how Christ lives in us.

Yesterday's message was established. We're established in grace.

Some people find those a little hokey, but I find them very practical

little memory tools to give the church. I think it connects with

people. Then it gives me a big skeleton outline in which I can work in

terms of planning the sermon series.

Preaching: As you and your co‑pastor look at the year in terms of what

is going to be preached, do you have any particular model or formula

concerning what topics you'll deal with this year? Do you do that kind

of planning together?

Lucado: My co‑pastor is Randy Frazee. Randy is the brightest bulb in

this box. He really has a feeling for what a church needs in terms of

maturity, so I listen to him. We've been working together for three

years. His first idea was: Let's take the whole church through the

Bible in a chronological fashion. We used a Bible called The Story. We

took the whole church through The Story. He did the Old Testament, and

I did the New Testament. That took us about a year.

Then he wanted to really zero in on the Book of Romans in his teaching

season. As he was teaching Romans, I was praying about what I needed

to teach. I felt it wasn't time to move out of the theme of Romans,

which is salvation by grace through faith. So I said I just want to

camp on this one more time, and he felt very good about that.He feels

that once I finish this grace series, the church is ready for some

practical steps toward spiritual maturity in terms of how the Bible is

understand, how it's applied, how we treat our neighbors and so forth.

So, he's planning a series this fall; I don't know the title yet, but

I think it will be more of a "roll up your sleeves and put your faith

to work" kind of a series.

Preaching: If you knew you had only one series left in you, what would

it be?

Lucado: It would be the seven sayings of Christ on the cross. I just

love those: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do. I

thirst. It is finished. Into Your hands I commit My spirit. Today you

will be with Me in paradise." That was really the heart of the second

book I wrote called No Wonder They Call Him Savior. Someday I want to

go back and maybe write another book on those seven sayings. I just

think they are kind of like a table of contents to the Christian hope.

They invite us to go into all the aspects of the heart of Jesus.

Everything about them from the drama, the setting, the passion around

themI think the seven sayings of the cross are powerful.

Preaching: When you finish a series such as the one you are in right

now, What Happens When Grace Happens, will that become a book?

Lucado: Yes. All of my sermons become books. I've been accused of

having no unpublished thought. I encourage pastors to do that. I think

there are so many great sermons that never really get circulation.

They go into a file drawer, but they're only really a generation or

two from being turned into a great book. I think what happens is that

we're so busy as pastors that we never get around to trying to turn

that material into a book. It's a shame because there is so much good

material out there that needs to be published.

Michael Duduit

Preaching magazineDr. Michael Duduit is executive and founding editor

of Preaching magazine and the founding dean of the Graduate School of

Ministry at Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina. He holds

an M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from

Florida State University.

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8 Ways to Make Your Church More Accessible by Rod Arnold

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BrandSmartChurch.com

Here are some smart, practical things you can do to connect with more

people in your community and give them a chance to get to know your

church.Email this articlePrint FriendlyHere are some smart, practical

things you can do to connect with more people in your community and

give them a chance to get to know you.

#1: Narrow Your Focus

The first question to ask yourself is, Who do we want to reach? Now,

I know the temptation here is to say, Everyone! We want to reach

everyone! And I agree your hearts desire should be to reach

everyone. But, generally speaking, one church cannot serve everyone.

Even though youll welcome anyone who walks through your doors with

open arms, in order to remain strategic it is important to identify

the specific people you are most capable of reaching, or those you

feel called to reach.

Who is your primary target? You may say unchurched people. Thats

great, but who specifically are they? Are they young, blue‑collar

families who live close to your church building? Are they older

retirees? Are they immigrants living in an adjacent neighborhood? Are

they college students from the nearby university? Take some time and

think about the people you want to reach, and prioritize the groups on

which you want to focus.

#2: Know Your Audience

How well do you know the people you want to reach? Get inside their

heads, walk in their shoes, and think about things from their

perspective. What is life like for them? What do they worry about

every day? What struggles do they face? What is their

religious/spiritual background? What are their goals and aspirations?

Where do they go for help?

Seven weeks ago, City Community Church launched as a church plant in

downtown Indianapolis. They knew who they wanted to target:

18‑35‑year‑old urbanites living and working downtown, a group that is

off of most churches radar. They spent months prior to the launch

getting to know this group of people, learning to speak their language

and connecting with them online using Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

The result was an overwhelmingly successful launch of 300+ people,

with consistent attendance and growth since then.

#3: Know Yourself

What is the unique promise that your church offers people? This is the

million‑dollar question. If you can answer this clearly and concisely,

and in a way that is meaningful to the people in your community, you

are ahead of 95% of churches. What Im really talking about here is

identifying the special sauce that your makes your church compelling

to people.

Discovering and articulating this for your church takes some work.

Start by identifying the features of your church objective things

like size, location, types of programs offered, worship style, service

length, types of topics covered, strengths (what do you do really

well?) and typical member characteristics. Next, identify which of

these features are unique to your church. Narrow your list down to the

top three or four unique features that you think make your church

distinct and compelling to people.

Now translate those unique features into benefits. Benefits are

similar to features, but the difference is that they speak directly to

how peoples needs are met. For example, if one of the needs you

identified in your community was that parents are worried that their

teenagers will get involved in the wrong crowd, and one of your

churchs unique features was a strong, active youth ministry, a

benefit might be that your church supports parents by offering their

teens a fun, worry‑free environment and opportunities for positive

friendships. You should come up with three or four unique benefits of

your church each an authentic representation of your churchs DNA,

and each meeting a real felt‑need of the people you want to reach.

Once you do this, simplify these primary benefits into a single

concept the unique promise your church offers. When you boil it all

down, what makes your church distinct and compelling? What is the

singular idea that makes your church meaningful to people? This is

what we call your brand promise a clear, concise concept that

makes you distinct from any other church or institution in your city.

It must be authentic to your true character and values. And it must be

meaningful to the people you want to reach. You should simplify this

promise to a short phrase that you and your team can remember.

This is what International Family Church has done. Located just

outside of Boston, IFC is composed of people from over 40 different

countries. They identified themselves as a multi‑cultural,

multi‑generational church that enables people to impact the world.

Reinforcing this concept through various media and communications has

resulted in a big boost in their peoples personal ownership in the

church vision and an enhanced sense of community.

#4: Get Real

There are two ideals I continually emphasize with churches I work

with authenticity and consistency:

Authenticity What you communicate to people about your church must

authentically represent who you are and what youre about. If you

promise or imply that your church is one thing, but the actual

experience is something different, you will actually antagonize

people and they will gladly tell their friends and family that you

re not who you say you are.

Consistency Once you have clarified who you are as a church, you

need to take a closer look at all your touchpoints and see how you

re doing. How well do your logo, tagline, images, designs and messages

communicate your brand promise? And how consistently do you

communicate at every point people touch your church? This includes

your website, advertisements, signage, parking lot attendants,

greeters, lobby design, childrens classrooms, bulletins, video

projection the list goes on an on. And of course, what is

communicated from the platform is critical too!

#5: Get Some Ink

One of the best ways to let people know what your church is all about

is for them to see stories about you in the local news media. Develop

relationships with local newspaper, magazine, TV and radio people, and

give them what they are looking for great stories. Look for stories

about people in your congregation, things that are happening at the

church, special events and anything else you can think of. Keep a

steady stream of press releases coming across their desks, each of

which should reinforce the unique benefits your church offers.

This strategy has paid off for Harvest Church in Byram, Mississippi.

The states largest newspaper recently featured the church because of

a sermon series they were doing called How To Be Rich. They

developed a good relationship with the reporter, who just contacted

them again last week for an interview about how churches are using

social media. This kind of publicity is much more effective than

advertising and its free!

#6: Cut Up Your Content

If youre like most churches these days, you are probably streaming

podcasts of your sermons. Thats great, but who is really listening to

them? Most likely it is people who are already in your congregation,

and they listen because they missed church last week. A podcast is not

the most effective tool for helping people get to know your church,

simply because a 45‑minute sermon is just too much for them to fit in

to their busy day.

One of the best ways to make your website content more effective is to

chop it up into bite‑sized pieces. If you create a special two‑minute

video for the service, post the video on your website also. If someone

tells a compelling story on Sunday morning, capture it on video and

post it on your website. If something funny happens, capture it on

video and post in on your website. You get the picture. People are

much more likely to watch these short snippets than they are to listen

to or watch an entire service. And these can be great tools for people

to quickly get to know your church better.

Tony Morgan, a pastor at multi‑site NewSpring Church in South

Carolina, does this with great effectiveness. By posting short videos

and his favorite quotes from senior pastor Perry Noble (which he calls

Perryisms), readers of his blog get a real taste of the churchs

culture and personality. Take, for example, last weeks video of the

worship band, where the church daringly uses opening Easter service

with their rendition of ACDate Originally Filed - Cs Highway to Hell. Definitely a great

way for people to experience the unique style of NewSpring!

#7: Empower Your People

In point #4 above, I listed a multitude of different touchpoints of

which you should take account, but I didnt mention the most important

one your people! Those same people who sit in the padded chairs

every Sunday are the most prolific representation of your church to

your community and the world. Not only are they physically in contact

with their family, neighbors, co‑workers and others all week long, but

most people now reach hundreds or thousands more virtually through

their blog, discussion boards and activity on social media sites like

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, StumbleUpon and others. Peoples circles

of influence are now exponentially greater than they were just a few

years ago. So the big question is: How are they representing your

church?

Obviously you cant control what your people say and do, but you can

influence it. Start by giving them the words to say. When the subject

of church comes up while having coffee with friends, hopefully your

members are able to clearly and concisely articulate what makes your

church unique and compelling. If you are consistently expressing your

brand promise from the platform and all your other communications, the

odds of them getting it right improve dramatically.

Also, the snippets of content you post on your website are great tools

to turn your people into activists for your church. Let them know a

video of that moving story from Sunday morning is posted online. Many

people will tell their universe of Twitter followers and Facebook

friends all about it and send them a link to check it out. If the

content is compelling enough, you could easily see hundreds or

thousands of new people introduced to your church and beginning a

potentially fruitful relationship.

#8: Join The Movement

If you havent already joined the hundreds of millions of people who

are expressing themselves online, its never been easier. A few months

ago, Pastor Rick White of The Peoples Church in Franklin, Tennessee

got a standing ovation from the entire youth group, who always sit

together in the front of the church, when he announced he was starting

a blog. People are hungry to hear from their leaders. But if a blog

seems like too much work, start with a tool like Twitter, a micro‑blog

tool that limits you to only 140 characters per post.

You Can Do This

Remember, people need to trust you before they join you. And they need

to know you before they trust you. And you wont get far at all if

they dont like you to begin with. Follow these steps, be authentic

and be consistent, and make your church worthy of a second date!

Rod Arnold

BrandSmartChurch.comRod Arnold is passionate about empowering leaders

and organizations to think smarter about strategy, branding and

marketing. For more than 15 years, Rod has worked with businesses,

non‑profit organizations, and churches as a branding and marketing

leader and strategist. He's the founder of BrandSmart Marketing and

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Hillsong United, Integrity Live, Acquire the Fire, BattleCry,

Dare2Share, Group and others. He also wrote What Smart Churches Know:

How Branding and Marketing Know‑How Can Revolutionize Your Church.You

can learn more from Rod at his blog at www.BrandSmartChurch.com.

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Megaphones and Soapboxes - Is Street Preaching Worth It? By Greg Stier

- 8/2011.101

Street Preaching

Megaphones and Soapboxes: Is Street Preaching Worth It? BY Greg Stier

Dare 2 Share Ministries

Greg Stier offers insight into the effectiveness of hard‑core street

witnessing.Email this articlePrint FriendlyLooking for a semester of

cross‑cultural experience, non‑Christian college student Kevin Roose

transferred to Liberty University. As an undercover unbeliever, Roose

s goal was to understand how Christians think and get a sense of the

evangelical culture from a firsthand insider perspective.

As part of his cultural experiment, Kevin decided to go on a weeklong

outreach adventure over Spring Break with a group of 13 other Liberty

students. Their mission? To bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the

beer‑guzzling, body‑baring, sand‑loving sinners on Daytona Beach. The

team was trained to share the gospel and then unleashed to comb the

beach on a spiritual search and rescue mission.

After a solid week of almost constant rejections, the group consoled

themselves that they had planted spiritual seeds that would sprout

later. Roose concluded that these well‑intentioned street evangelists

had really not made any converts. Even the few who had ostensibly said

yes to Jesus were not followed up on or plugged into local churches.

In his words,

The issue of post‑salvation behavior is an interesting one. I

thought, when Scott was teaching us to evangelize, that wed be told

to do some sort of follow‑up with successful converts, if we had

anyguide them to a local church, maybe, or at least take their

contact information. But theres no such procedure. If Jason had

decided to get saved (he didnt), Martina would have led him through

the Sinners Prayer (Jesus, I am a sinner, come into my heart and be

my Lord and Savior or some variant thereof), she would have let him

know he was saved, perhaps given him some Bible verses to read, and

they never would have seen each other again. Cold‑turkey evangelism

provides the shortest, most non‑committal conversion offer of any

Western religionwhich, I suspect, is part of the appeal. (Source:

salon.com).

Interesting.

Clearly he didnt write his article out of vindictiveness or venom. He

seemed to actually like these evangelicals and was exploring why they

were willing to go through all the pain and strain of being persecuted

without seeing tangible results. His conclusion was that the prospect

of saving someone from hell was enough witnessing fuel to keep them

going in the face of mockery and disdain.

Before I give my perspective on all this, let me explain that I was

born and bred on street evangelism. I did my first cold‑turkey

evangelism when I was 11 years old. I was terrified and trembling as I

shared the gospel. But I was hooked. This was the closest thing I had

experienced to extreme sports and I loved it.

The church that reached my entire beer‑drinking, body‑building,

tobacco‑chewing family (and thats just the women!) was a street

evangelist training ground. My tough, ripped Uncle Jack was led to

Christ when the preacher at this church went to his house, knocked on

his door, and started sharing the good news of salvation. That began a

domino effect of salvation in my large extended family.

As a result, I was immersed into this pre‑evangelical world of

fundamentalist Christianity and loved it. Why? Because, now I not only

had a real Heavenly Father (I was the product of a one‑night stand and

never knew my biological father), but I had a purpose: the salvation

of souls from hell.

From that first witnessing experience as a fifth grader to my freshman

year at Liberty University, hardly a Friday night went by without me

and my Christian compadres going soulwinning at local malls across

Denver.

We would gather together, train the newcomers, and head out to do

cold‑turkey evangelism. While sharing my faith, I have been hit, spit

at, picked up by the throat, pushed down, laughed at, and mocked

relentlessly. But these became battle scars for my adolescent soul. I

could talk about them and show them off later to my fundie friends.

After all, every rejection was worth it if just one person put their

faith and trust in Jesus. And unlike Kevin Roose, we were trained to

try and get the people we led to Christ plugged into our church, where

they too could be trained as street evangelists.

I estimate conservatively that I personally witnessed to 5,000 people

from the time I was 11 until I left for college. I was an expert at

serving cold‑turkey evangelism sandwiches. But to be honest, out of

all of the street evangelism I have done, I am only aware of a handful

of stories when someone who got saved actually got plugged into a

faith community.

So do I think street evangelism works? Yes and no. Yes in the sense

that I have seen countless people look me in the eye and say yes to

Jesus. In my heart of hearts, I know that many of them were sincere.

As - Romans 10:13 - Romans 10:13} reminds us, Everyone who

calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. It makes no

preconditions about location or depth of the relationship. If they

genuinely believe in Christ, then they truly receive the gift of

eternal life. So, yes, I believe street evangelism works when it comes

to making converts. But I dont believe it works well when it comes to

making disciples.

Does that mean that I think we shouldnt do street/mall/park

evangelism? No. I just think we should try to do it differently.

To be honest, God has been taking me on a journey of reflection over

the last several months and I am trying to figure out where He is

leading. You see, my goal is to make as many disciples, not as many

converts, as I can before I die. Making converts is merely additional

(souls added to the kingdom). But making disciples is exponential

(souls multiplied through disciples who make disciples who make more

disciples.) And the street and the shopping mall are not the best

places for making disciples. Again, we may have opportunities with

various strangers and we should make the most of them to wisely and

gracefully share the good news. God may be using you to plant a seed,

water the seed or reap the harvest with those strangers He brings

across your path. But I am more and more convinced that sharing Christ

with strangers must be done in a very specific way.

Greg Stier

Dare 2 Share MinistriesGreg Stier is the founder and president of Dare

2 Share Ministries. His website offers hundreds of resources (many of

them free) for evangelism and youth ministry, including a field guide

called Dare 2 Share. This practical book will give Christians the

tools they need to share their faith with anyone, anywhere and anytime

in a compelling and Biblical way.

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Dealing with the Preacher‑Eaters - Joe McKeever

- 8/2011.101

Dealing with the Preacher‑Eaters

Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.com

Joe McKeever shares practical advice for dealing with the

self‑appointed church rulers who try to dominate your preaching and

your ministry. Email this articlePrint FriendlyRecently, I cautioned

young assistant pastors on a snare lying in their path (i.e., certain

church members puffing them up into believing that they are superior

to the pastor and ought to have his job). In telling my own story from

several decades back, I expressed gratitude that I had not become the

senior pastor for several reasons. Chief among them was the extremely

strong laymen who exercised great influence in that church who would

have "chewed me up and spat me out."

A young pastor wrote asking me to elaborate on that. Who are those

men? How do they operate? What is a pastor to do when he finds himself

serving a church with such leadership in place?

Nothing that follows is meant to imply that I have all wisdom on this

subject. Far from it. I carry scars from encounters with some of those

mennot men from that church in my previous article, but from their

clones with whom I did battle in two subsequent churches.

The Apostle John wrote to a friend whom he called "beloved Gaius" in

the little epistle we call III John. The key issue is a church boss

who was exercising tyrannical control over the congregation. John

says, "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the

preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I

will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with

malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not

receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out

of the church" (III - John 9‑10 - John 9‑10}).

They've always been with us, these self‑important self‑appointed

church rulers who reign as big frogs in small ponds and get their

thrills from dominating God‑sent ministers.

Who are they?

They are almost always men. I've never seen a woman try to control the

church and the preachers the way some men do. Perhaps you have. Human

nature being what it is, doubtless there are female Diotrephes out

there. Thankfully, they are rare.

Where do they come from?

Ah, there is the rub.

Some of these menlet's call them Sons of Diotrephesare serious

disciples of Jesus Christ who rose to leadership positions in the

church on their merit. They stepped in at difficult times for the

church and provided the wisdom, the direction, and the leadership that

saved the day. The congregation is grateful and now naturally looks to

them for direction long after the crisis is over.

When a new pastor arrives at a church, he will want to identify the

influence‑makers. Whether they hold elective offices or not, these are

the men and women to whom the congregation naturally (and first!)

looks when critical decisions must be made. If they oppose a program

the new preacher is presenting, he's in trouble from the start. He

does well to get to know these people and to keep them on his side.

Some Sons‑of‑Diotrephes are not serious disciples of Jesus but simply

stepped in and filled a leadership vacuum at a crisis period in the

church's life and now refuse to vacate it. They enjoy being

power‑brokers. Such people are the bane of every pastor and the death

knell for every church unless the congregation acts to break their

stranglehold.

Sometimes carnal men are assigned church leadership roles by merit of

their wealth or position in the community. In a small to medium‑size

church made up of typical Americans, the owner of a factory or large

business will always stand out. The deference which he commands during

the week will be shown him on Sunday. If he is regular in attendance

and generous with his money, he's almost automatically going to be

elected to key positions. Whether he is godly and humbleSpirit‑filled

and mission‑minded, with a servant spirit and a heart for Godor not,

rarely comes into play in the typical church.

How sad is that?

Pity the new pastor who walks into a church unprepared to deal with

carnal leaders who enjoy their power positions and cannot wait to let

the new minister know who's in charge.

Dealing with the Sons of Diotrephes

In the church where I served as a staff member (referred to in the

previous article), the strongest lay leaders, the ones who ruled and

insisted that the pastor deal with them, were a handful of business

leaders in the city. Some were related to one another. To me

personally, they were sweet and friendly and a pleasure to fellowship

with. However, I was a lowly staffer and hardly a blip on their radar.

It was the pastor who was in their cross‑hairs.

Quick story. A new pastor arrived and quickly ran into the reality of

this small cadre of Diotrephes‑clones (the SODs). After a few

difficult years, the weary pastor bailed out and relocated to another

state. Some years later, when the pastor who succeeded him got into

moral trouble and had to resign abruptly, the pastor search committee

wanted the former pastor to return. They were surprised by his

response.

"Before I agree to talk with your committee," he said, "I want Mr.

Diotrephes (he named him, of course) to fly out here and ask me

personally to become the pastor. If he doesn't, I'm not interested."

When Diotrephes showed up at the pastor's office, hat in hand, asking

him to return, the pastor let him know that if he came back to that

church, things would be different. Otherwise, no soap. He returned and

led that congregation through many years of ministry and growth. To my

knowledge, his influence and leadership and authority as pastor were

never seriously threatened thereafter.

I've never forgotten that lesson. Unfortunately, his was an unusual

situation, not easily duplicated by other pastors.

Question: How would a pastor deal with the Sons of Diotrephes in the

new church where he has gone to serve? Very carefully. Extremely

prayerfully.

A wise pastor will find out before he goes to a church how decisions

are made there and whether unelected, self‑appointed laypeople call

the shots. A little investigating (such as talking with the previous

pastors or the local denominational leadership) will tell him whether

he wants to proceed further with the pastor search committee.

The former pastor made no bones about it with me. "Joe," the older

gentleman said, as he put his long arms around my shoulder, "twenty of

the most miserable years of my life were spent in that church."

That is exactly what he said.

"A little group was organized against me. They fought me on every

decision. Whenever they got word that we were going to be presenting

anything for a church vote, they burned up the phone lines organizing

their people to oppose it."

And yet, I still went to that church. I went in knowing that I could

expect opposition from a small, powerful group of members. Sure

enough, they were on the job. As we've written elsewhere, I found out

later that some decided I was too conservative for their liking and

decided before the moving van was unloaded that I would have to go.

Instead of staying 20 years as I intended, I stayed three.

In our case, we called in a church consultant. He spent many weeks

studying our situation and faulted the church for having no

constitution and bylaws which left a leadership vacuum to be filled by

strong‑willed laypeople. He found that while I was not responsible for

the church's division, I had become its focus and recommended that I

move to another church so the congregation could create a constitution

and start fresh with a new pastor.

It hurt to walk away. But I realized later that doing so probably

saved my life. The stress of that pastorate was slowly killing me.

Something inside us probably would like God to deal with the SODs the

way he protected Moses against them. From - Numbers

16 - Numbers 16}....

Now, Korah the son of Izhar (and a number of his buddies) rose up

before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and

fifty leaders of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered

together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much

upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them,

and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the

assembly of the Lord?"

When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, and he spoke to Korah and

all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is

His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him.... You

take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

Moses said to them, "You and all your company are gathered together

against the Lord." ( - Numbers 16:11 - Numbers 16:11})

The next day, the ground split apart under (these men). The earth

opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all

the men with Korah, with all their goods.... The earth closed over

them, and they perished from among the assembly.

Wasn't this a little harsh? Well, God did it, not Moses. And God being

God, He can do as He pleases ( - Psalm 115:3 - Psalms 115:3}).

By the way, one day one of the SODs came to me at church and said,

"Joe, does it not matter to you the caliber of the people who are

opposed to you?" At the time, all I muttered was, "It does." Only

later did the Lord call - Numbers 16 - Numbers 16} to my mind

where the "men of renown" opposed Moses.

In Moses' case and in my case, God dealt with those men. Dramatically

in Moses' case, not so much in mine. As far as I can tell. And that's

an important point.

I stood in front of a church I had been serving for seven years and

told the congregation how a small group of SODs were making life

miserable for me. They did not represent the larger membership, I said

and was glad to know, but they were a constant drag on my ministry and

a thorn in my flesh. From the pulpit I addressed that group: I need

you to know two important things: One, God is using your opposition to

purify me and make me stronger. So I am grateful for you. Second, you

will stand before the Lord one day and give account for what you are

doing to His church and the man He has sent as your pastor. And

friend, I wouldn't be in your shoes for anything in the world. I

thought of the line, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of

the living God ( - Hebrews 10:31 - Hebrews 10:31}).

Toward the end of that sermon that day, I told the Diotrephes clan,

"From now on, I'm serving you notice. We will love you, we will listen

to you, and then we're going to ignore you. But we are going forward."

The congregation burst into applause. Some asked later why it had

taken me so long to kill that snake.

The answer was that I was still in recovery from the turmoil in the

previous church (the one referred to above where the older pastor had

spent 20 miserable years, to which I devoted only three years).

Furthermore, it took seven years in this church to gain the confidence

that the congregation looked to me as pastor and would support me in a

stand against the SODs.

Here are my suggestions to the pastor who finds himself in this snake

pit:

1. Spend a great deal of time on your knees.

2. Protect your wife from much of the stress. If she can continue

loving the SODs and their families without reservation, all the

better. She will need to know some, but not everything.

3. Remember the Lord's instructions of - Luke 6:27 - Luke

6:27}ff. In loving your enemies‑‑those who hate you or curse you or

threaten you‑‑you are to do good deeds for them, bless them, pray for

them, and give to them. Among other benefits, you will make sure that

ill will and resentment will not linger in your heart.

4. Minister to the SODs faithfully as though they are your biggest

supporters. Otherwise, you are giving them material to use against

you.

5. As you gain the trust of the rest of the congregation, in God's

timing, you will be able to withstand the SODs more aggressively and

with greater success.

6. Remember that a short‑term pastorate plays right into their hands.

If you leave after only a few years, they are vindicated that their

leadership is needed to save the church during the interim, and they

will be lying in wait for the next pastor. You will have done him no

favors.

7. Vengeance is not yours. (See - Romans 12:9‑21 - Romans

12:9‑21} for a manual on dealing with everyone in the church,

including the Sons of Diotrephes.) Your job is to preach the Word and

love the sheep and stay close to the Lord.

There is one more method, a quick one, that ends the

Sons‑of‑Diotrephes' hold on the church. Other laymen inside the

congregation can rise up against the SODs and put them out of business

anytime they please.

The SODs have the pastor in a hammerlock. This is his job and he needs

an income to feed his family. If he gets run off from this church and

finds himself unemployed, he will find it difficult to get another

church. Pastor search committees are understandably wary of flockless

shepherds. "If you're so hot, why aren't you leading a church?"

However, the SODs have no such control over the other laypeople.

That's why they try to work behind the scenes with the other men and

women in the congregation. They use friendship, gifts, thoughtfulness,

appointments, and honors to curry favor with the deacons and teachers

and officers of the church. The laypeople are so trusting of these

(ahem) wonderful people, they "just know" they couldn't possibly be

doing all those terrible things to the pastor. And so, like sheep,

they go on their way, allowing the wolves to harass the shepherd.

The remedy: in a church business meeting, stand up and ask important

questions. "Who decided this?" "Pastor, was this what you wanted?"

"Who is on that committee?" Two things the SODs cannot stand are

exposure (everyone finding out what they've been doing behind the

scenes) and accountability (insisting that decision‑makers report to

the congregation on what they did and why).

Sons of Diotrephes have contempt for the laity in their congregation.

They know the great mass of the members want to be left alone and

protected from the inner workings of their church. This provides them

with a field on which to do their work. Hold them accountable. Ask

questions of them in public. Turn on the lights. Let fresh air into

the inner workings of what used to be known as smoked‑filled rooms.

You might end up saving your church and rescuing an embattled pastor.

There is no one‑size‑fits‑all plan for dealing with self‑appointed

church bosses. But I hope my analysis provides some assistance to

God's pastors. Don't forget, friend, to mobilize your prayer support

team. In good times and bad, you'll need a cadre of intercessors

regularly entering the Throne Room on your behalf.

Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.comDr. Joe McKeever is a preacher, cartoonist and the

retired Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater

New Orleans. Currently he loves to serve as a speaker/pulpit fill for

revivals, prayer conferences, deacon trainings, leadership banquets

and other church events. Visit him and enjoy his insights on nearly 50

years of ministry at JoeMcKeever.com.

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You Can't Please Everyone with Your Preaching - Peter Mead

- 8/2011.101

You Can't Please Everyone with Your Preaching

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net Cor Deo

The challenge with criticism is to sort it through and preach for our

audience of One, yet with a loving sensitivity to the many who sit and

listen.Email this articlePrint Friendly

The goal in preaching is not to please all of your listeners. We know

that. But in our vulnerability, it can be very uncomfortable to hear

that some are not happy with our preaching. The challenge is to try

to figure out why and then know whether to adjust or not. Here are

some possible reasons and possible responses.

Over Their HeadsPerhaps your preaching is simply not pitched

effectively. You use terminology that is unnecessarily lofty or

academic and people simply struggle to understand you. There is no

virtue in this and you need to hear the feedback. If you cant make

it understandable, it is your problem rather than theirs. The flesh

has a tendency to show‑off, but there is no excuse for fleshly

preaching. Hear the feedback graciously and seek to change.

Overly Grating Their TolerancePerhaps your personality is simply

grating and they struggle with you. This is a hard one to quantify or

change. I suppose in an ideal world your increasing fruit of the

Spirit as you mature should alleviate this problem over time (but what

if theyre not growing?) Sometimes two personalities will clash and

it will always be a struggle. Sometimes people hide behind the clash

of personalities when there is an underlying sin issue that should be

addressed (jealousy, bitterness, contempt, etc.). This is a harder

problem to address, but loving them is not a bad path to take.

Overly Burdening Their LivesPerhaps your preaching is simply weighing

them down with duty and burden. This may be a misunderstanding of

both the Bible and the preachers task on your part, or a

misunderstanding of Christianity on theirs. I would suspect the

former. Too many think that the preacher needs to spiritually beat

and berate listeners in order to be truly preaching. Too many have a

sort of flagellation by sermon approach to spirituality. Some

listeners feel somehow better when they can walk out of church and

say, Mmm, I needed that! But this approach to Christianity will

tend to break bruised reeds and snuff out smoldering wicks.

Overly Touching Their HeartsPerhaps your preaching is simply touching

too close to home. If you are preaching in such a way as to target

the hearts of your listeners, then many will resonate deeply with what

youre doing. But in any church there will be some who are

essentially hard‑hearted, who want the preaching to meet certain

criteria and stroke the egos of the religious and pious. Some find it

deeply convicting to feel as if they dont really have a loving

personal relationship with God. They revolt at the notion that those

who do not love Christ are actually accursed. Its painful, but if

this is the issue, then the fact that a small minority are unhappy may

be a strong affirmation of your preaching. Would we prefer to have

everyone be pleasantly untouched?

There are other reasons, and often a blend of more than one. The

challenge is to sort it through and preach for our audience of One,

yet with a loving sensitivity to the many who sit and listen. It is

wrong to refuse to hear feedback, and it is wrong to try to please

everyone. Love Him, love them and respond to the feedback where

appropriate.

Peter Mead

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Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

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mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/peter‑

mead‑you‑cant‑please‑everyone‑with‑your‑preaching‑963.asp?utm\_source=ne

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Memorable Sermon Opener - Start with a Bang! Crafting a Memorable Sermon Opener - Tyler Scarlett

- 8/2011.101

Memorable Sermon Opener

Start with a Bang! Crafting a Memorable Sermon Opener

Tyler Scarlett

Preaching.com

If you lose your congregation at the beginning, you will have to work

twice as hard to get them back by the end. Why not give your message

the best possible chance to connect with people at the outset? Email

this articlePrint FriendlyGreat books often begin with great opening

lines. Who doesn't remember the beginning of Charles Dickens' A Tale

of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times"?

What about the curiously blunt start to Moby Dick, "Call me Ishmael"?

Authors know that if you waste a person's time at the beginning,

chances are they won't stick around to the end. What's true with books

is also true with sermons.

A preacher's worst fear is that the congregation will stop listening.

What is far more dreadful than this is if the people never were

listening in the first place. When one takes too much time verbally

meandering into the sermon, the temptation to tune out the preacher

becomes all too real. If your words wander, minds will, too.

Preachers often make the naïve assumption that the congregation

arrives to church brimming with enthusiasm to hear the message. Who

hasn't imagined members going to bed early on Saturday night, eating a

hearty breakfast in the morning, spending an hour in prayer, and

calmly driving to church with a Bible, pen and notebook in handbeing

sure to arrive 30 minutes early? Seasoned preachers know this is

rarely, if ever, the case.

By the time attendees find a seat in church, chances are many people

already have had an argument, made plans for the rest of the day or

(most likely) had an argument about their plans for the rest of the

day. As Wayne McDill has noted, when most people arrive, they "are

preoccupied with their own personal concerns, tired, bored, and

suspicious that the preacher is about to make it worse."

People may be in front of us, but that does not mean they are

necessarily with us. Ears are like tractor‑trailer weigh stations.

Just because you see them doesn't mean they're open. Given this

challenge, the preacher's task of gaining a hearing is critical to

effective communication.

Sermon introductions are a lot like chess. Mess up the beginning, and

you may have messed up the whole thing. Ramesh Richards has gone so

far as to say, "If you do not have your audience yearning (within the

first few minutes) for the rest of the sermon, [it] might as well go

home." However, if you begin the sermon with a clear, confident,

intriguing opener, it can draw people in instantly. It will assure

them you are going somewhere worthwhile. It will pique their curiosity

and compel them to follow along closely.

Granted, the opening sentence is not the most important part of the

sermon. If the choice is between a good sermon opener and a clear,

accurate exposition of the text, by all means jettison the opener.

Nevertheless, if you lose your congregation at the beginning, you will

have to work twice as hard to get them back by the end. Why not give

your message the best possible chance to connect with people at the

outset? Plan to start the sermon strong.

Whether it's "mama" or "dada," a baby's first words get a lot of

attention. The preacher's first words should, too. Here's how to craft

a memorable sermon opener that will give people a reason to sit up and

listen from the very start.

1. Craft the opening sentence to be simple.

There is hardly anything more laborious and attention‑squelching than

a long, never‑ending sentence that seems to drag on and on with

exceedingly too many adjectives, as well as verbal tangents that go

nowhere and continue along with virtually no conceivable end in sight.

(Get my drift?)

Less is often more. This is particularly true with the sermon's first

sentence. Bryan Chapell's advice about sermon introductions is wise:

"Be direct. Be focused. Be specific." Likewise, Haddon Robinson

suggests, "The minister should make the most of his first 25 words to

seize attention." From the moment you begin to speak, keep it simple.

There is an old saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first

impression." What's true in life is also true in preaching. Bloviate

at the beginning, and you likely will not draw in listeners. The start

of the sermon also is not the time for stumbling around with "ums" and

"uhs." Verbal speed bumps such as these tend to distract even the most

sincere listener. To ensure the kind of clarity and brevity needed, it

may be helpful to flesh out the sermon's first sentence or two on

paper. Write it. Edit it. Rewrite it as needed. Make it say exactly

what you want.

For instance, a message about the biblical foundation of marriage

could begin, "Marriage is not just a good idea; it is a God‑idea."

That is not only true, but also very memorable. It is the kind of

statement a person will scribble in the margin of his or her Bible and

relate to friends.

"God cannot do everything." Such a statement certainly will attract

the attention of skeptics and seekers. However, it also can serve as a

powerful introduction to a message on - Titus 2:2 - Titus

2:2}, "God, who cannot lie, promised long ago"

A train conductor does not waste his voice by announcing, "Everyone

needs to get on the train so we can commence our departure as soon as

possible." No. All he needs to shout is, "All aboard!" and people

listen. Just a few choice words confidently spoken can say it all.

Make your opening sentence brief. The pithier the better.

2. Craft the opening sentence to be iconic.

If possible in the opener, give people a preview of where the sermon

is going. Provide them with an appetizer that will whet their mental

appetites for the main course. As the Roman orator Quintilian once

said, "A flawed introduction is like a scarred face." It makes you

want to run away. Be sure from the start to give the audience

something appealing to attract them.

Hollywood not only spends big bucks on producing high‑quality

blockbuster films but also puts a lot of time and money into movie

trailers. Previews tease the audience by showing a glimpse of what can

be seen in the feature presentation. It's the producer's way of

saying, "You don't want to miss this!" A good opening sentence

likewise can be a sermon trailer or preview of what's ahead.

God certainly began the Book of Genesis in this kind of iconic way.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Not only do

those words introduce the creation account, they also implant a sense

of wonder about who this God is and what He is going to do with His

new creation.

I recently was preaching from - Matthew 3 - Matthew 3} about

the message of John the Baptist. I opened by sharing a story from my

childhood about my dad's poor driving. In an unfamiliar city, my

father unknowingly began driving the wrong way down a one‑way street.

I began the sermon/story with these words, "The man repeatedly was

shouting, Turn around right now!'" It not only introduced a man in my

story, but it also introduced John the Baptist. The phrase, "Turn

around right now!" became a refrain that I repeated throughout the

entire message. A sermon opener that echoes the central idea of the

text is a helpful touch.

George Orwell's book 1984 begins with the memorable line, "It was a

bright, cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen."

There's something relatable, even familiar, when he mentions a cold

day in April. Yet there's something puzzlingly unfamiliar about the

clocks striking "thirteen." It is as though Orwell is telling the

reader up front, "You are about to journey into a new and fascinating

world." He gives a tiny preview of what lies ahead. Doing the same

with your sermon opener will benefit your listeners.

3. Craft the opening sentence to be intriguing.

"Peaches can kill you!" Those were the unexpected first words out of

my mouth from a series on temptation. I went on to explain that inside

a peach pit is a mineral known as amygdalin. Under certain

circumstances, that mineral can produce a new compound, commonly known

as cyanide. I told my congregation that temptation often looks

delicious, but hidden inside is something dangerous and destructive. A

few days later, I someone told me, "Pastor, since that sermon I've

never looked at a peach the same way. It always reminds me of how

dangerous temptation can be." Such a shocking first sentence may help

the sermon stick in people's minds.

Kent Edwards advises, "Effective first sentences could be paradoxical

statements, twists on familiar quotations, or even rhetorical

questions." A sermon dealing with God's omniscience may begin by

asking, "Has it ever dawned on you that nothing ever dawns on God?"

Raising a thought‑provoking question will inspire a search for the

right answer.

Graham Johnston writes, "The opening line establishes a tension with

the emotional ingredients to draw in the listener." Your first words

should force the audience to ask, "I wonder what's next?" Solomon

began the Book of Ecclesiastes this way: "Vanity of vanities! All is

vanity!" ( - Ecc. 1:1 - Ecclesiastes 1:1}) What a fitting way

to introduce the reader to the king's angst about living a life

without God.

When the apostle Paul addressed the men at Mars Hill, he gained an

instant audience with his complimentary opener, "Men of Athens, I

observe that you are very religious in all respects" ( - Acts

17:22 - Acts 17:22}). In just a few words, Paul commended his audience,

raised curiosity and set the stage for his powerful apologetic.

In the same temptation series that I mentioned earlier, another sermon

began with me announcing, "I want you to be a destructive alcoholic!"

The room fell silent. I clearly had everyone's attention. The

congregation was dying to know why I began with such a controversial

statement. I followed it by calmly asking them to consider, "Wouldn't

it be nice if temptation was this honest about its endgame?" Such

unexpected sermon openers will arrest people's attention and give them

a reason upfront to keep listening.

A Russian proverb sums it up well: "It is the same with men as with

donkeys: Whoever would hold them fast must get a very good grip on

their ears!" From the moment you step into the pulpit, listeners

instinctively are wondering, "Why should I listen today?" Your opening

sentence should leave no doubt. Every preacher must earn the right to

be heard. Start with a bang, and you will do just that.

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10 Tiny Tweaks to Liven Up Sunday Mornings - Diana Davis

- 8/2011.101

10 Tweaks for Sunday AM

10 Tiny Tweaks to Liven Up Sunday Mornings

Diana Davis

LifeWay.com

Need a few fresh ideas to keep your Sunday service from predictable

sameness?Email this articlePrint FriendlyIf someone snuck into your

church and replaced Sundays bulletins with last years bulletins,

would anyone notice? Need a few fresh ideas to keep your Sunday

service from predictable sameness?

1. Fill prime seating.

Challenge your churchs most vibrant age group to help lead worship by

filling the front and center seats weekly.

2. Set the mood.

Set a relaxed, worshipful pre‑service tone with live or recorded

music, along with pre‑service audiovisuals of announcements and

Scriptures.

3. Light matters.

Use quality lighting during the pastors sermon. To add variety, dim

light for the Lords Supper, backlight a musician, uplight a theme

banner, shine colored lights on a focal wall, or spotlight a dramatic

scene in the center aisle.

4. Theme enthusiasm.

Plan ahead to visually reinforce a sermon series. Make banners for the

worship center or exterior. Plan a serial skit or unique handout.

Create a distinctive display for the foyer or stage.

5. Ushers can rope rear seating to help seat worshippers toward the

front.

They should graciously seat latecomers at an appropriate time and take

care of interruptions and needs during worship.

6. Quality music with variety.

Try adding a different instrument such as bagpipe, zither, violin, or

a person whistling. Try an echo duet from the balcony or worshipful

solo from the audience.

7. Smooth transition.

Intentional silence can be worshipful; dead spots are not. Does it

take ninety seconds to arrange the childrens choir or wait for

someone to stroll to the mike? Plan carefully to use every scheduled

moment wisely.

8. Intentional interaction.

Invite worshippers to reverently stand for Scripture reading. Offer a

fill‑in‑the‑blank sermon outline listening sheet (ideas at The Sermon

Handout: Uses, Abuses, Ideas, and Samples). Quote 1 Chronicles 29:13

14 in unison before offertory.

9. See with fresh eyes.

Ask an interior designer or interior decorator to assess your church

platform area. Inexpensive changes may make a huge impactplants,

rugs, paint colors, polished pulpit, rearranged seating, reupholstered

furniture.

10. Small adjustments create interest.

Rearrange choir seating or praise team placement. Vary the Scripture

reader. Add seasonal flowers or banners. Slightly tweak the order of

worshipbaptism at the beginning, offertory last, or sing after the

sermon.

As you plan worship for our great God, create anticipation with a

fresh, updated plan every Sunday. Oh, and there might be an additional

benefit: less snoring in church.

Diana Davis

LifeWay.comDiana Davis lives in Indianapolis, where her husband Steve

serves as the Executive Director for the State Convention of Baptists

in Indiana. A popular womens conference speaker, Diana has ministered

to womens groups internationally. She especially loves encouraging

pastors' wives and deacons wives at her blog, KeepOnShining.com.

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7 Ways to Close the Back Door

Top 7 Ways to Close the Back Door of Your Church

Rob Overton

ChurchLead.com

"It is incredibly easy for a growing church to appear healthy while

leaving bruised and battered people in its wake."Email this

articlePrint FriendlyI am very concerned about this issue because we

have far too many churches who are just churning people. It is

incredibly easy for a growing church to appear healthy while leaving

bruised and battered people in its wake. This is because, if you

subtract a 20% back‑door rate from a 40% visitor connection rate, you

are left with a 20% growth rate, which appears healthy! I think it's

tragic. Just so I won't be picking on the growing churches, I have

seen just as many churches who have had the same attendance for years,

but the faces are constantly changing. Where did they all go? I

would like to think that just found another church that "met their

needs." Unfortunately, I am afraid to ponder how many have not just

left a church, but have left Christianity altogether.

As a point of clarification, when I refer to the back door, I am

talking about people who made an initial connection, assimilated into

one of main areas of emphasis of the church, and made church a part of

their normal routine. I am not talking about people who have never

connected into the life of the church. If a person never successfully

connects, then they just turn around and go out the same way they came

in, through the front door. Initial visitor connection requires its

own proactive process and has a different set of dynamics. I'll deal

with visitor connection and initial assimilation in a separate

article.

People stop coming to a church for many reasons, but the biggest

factors are the lack of close relationships and the lack of meaningful

service. This situation opens the door to a perception among

unconnected people that the leaders are apathetic towards their

situation. Identifying the factors is the easy part. Doing something

about it is a bit harder. In this post, I would like to share what I

believe to be the top seven ways to close the back door of the

church. I want this list to be practical, so in order to set the

stage, I want to talk a little bit about attendance. Every church I

have worked with of substantial size has lamented the inability to

capture worship attendance. They are right. It is virtually

impossible to get accurate individual attendance of worship services.

We're not talking head counts, but attendance that shows who was or

was not present. That does not stop churches from trying! I just

don't see inaccurate attendance as good stewardship. If you can't

trust your attendance numbers so that you can confidently follow up

with absentees, then it is a waste of time.

1.Measure what is measurable. While worship attendance is hard to

capture, adult small groups classes are relatively simple. Children's

activities are the simplest of all since security issues require us to

keep accurate records anyway. So, measure what you can measure. Yes,

you will get push‑back from some of your established groups, but if

you give them some context you will get their support. By context, I

mean that they have to understand that the issue is bigger than their

group. If you show them that you are trying to be good stewards of

these people who are your responsibility, they will usually get on

board. Ask them to help you be faithful with your responsibility.

2.Catch people on their way out of the back door. One of the

fundamental mistakes that I see churches make is to focus on what has

happened in the past. It is not that looking back has no value, it

just won't help you get anyone back! Gone is gone! Think of it this

way. If someone gets upset and you recognize that they are about to

leave, you can intervene and smooth the situation. But if that person

leaves, gets home and settles into their favorite chair in front of

the TV, what are the odds of getting them to come back? Not very good

are they? It takes a person about four weeks to move from "I don't

think the church cares about me" to "I know the church does not care

about me". Catch them on the way out and this can be prevented.

3.Know who you expect to attend. In order to know who was not in

attendance, you have to know who was supposed to be in attendance.

This sounds simple but it is often counter to the way that churches

have kept their records for years. This means that you are going to

have to do some work to keep class rosters clean enough to know the

difference. For example, a list of 100 kids who missed the past three

classes is too large for you to effectively contact. In reality,

there might only be five kids in that list of 100 who have been

attending in the past few months. These five kids represent the five

families that are on their way out the back door! This is the

information that you desperately need to know, and it is so often

buried in the attendance reports of the church.

4.Use the right people to reach out to them. In a group setting,

sometimes the problem is a disconnect between the group itself and the

person who is leaving. In this situation, the group leader is not in

a position to help the situation. This is where the church staff can

be very effective by helping people find a place where they fit better

or acting as an intermediary to rectify a dispute. Be sure to offer a

graceful way back in. I think that people don't want to hurt anyone's

feelings and think that the easiest way to solve a problem is to just

leave. If they are assured that it is OK to try a new group or a new

volunteer position, that might make all the difference.

5.Focus on families. For the most part, children do not attend church

on their own. So, if little Johnny has not been to his four‑year‑old

Sunday school class in three weeks, it is a very safe assumption that

Mom and Dad have not been there, either. Since it is much easier to

track children and students, use that information to prompt your

efforts toward the families of those kids. This is particularly true

of a family where the parents are not active in any other area than

worship. Let the ministry area try to reconnect the individual, but

treat a 3rd or 4th time absentee as an opportunity to connect a

family.

6.Build retention mechanisms and processes. Mechanisms are just ways

to find out who is leaving. This can be in the form of reports from

your attendance records. It can also be from feedback from people in

the church. You have to establish some policies on what kind of

attendance pattern will trigger your retention processes. In some

churches, this might be three absences in a row, while others might

use four or five. Just be sure to stick to what is happening rather

than what happened! Your processes are the methods you put in place

to make sure that those who are identified are contacted and

assisted. This might include phone calls, e‑mails, letters, texts,

Facebook notes or any other method of communication that would be

effective. These contacts have to be personal. No matter the form of

communication used, sincerity and authenticity will be of the utmost

importance. If people in the church trust that you have good

processes to follow up with people, I have found that they are much

more willing to share information with church leaders. They will not

share information with you if they don't think it will make any

difference.

7.Build processes for the major emphasis areas of the church. The

difference between good intentions and success is often determined by

the presence of a logical process. Constructed correctly, no one

should ever slip through the cracks once they are identified. This is

the same thing that must be done in an assimilation process for a

newcomer to the church. The only difference is that it has to be

handled a bit differently. The processes you build will be logical

steps that will lead to participation in that particular area of your

church. This might be connection groups, serving opportunities,

leadership roles, spiritual formation steps or any other activity that

you consider to be part of your "church core."

I have spent thousands of hours helping churches build connection,

assimilation, and retention processes. As every church is unique, the

processes are always slightly different. The most important element

is an acknowledgment that it is critically important to guard the back

door of the church. Church management systems (ChMS) today offer many

ways to facilitate these processes, but they still require careful

configuration and a very intentional approach to be effective. I have

a good deal of experience in these systems, and it is important to

choose one that fits your needs and is flexible enough to work the way

that you need it to work.

I encourage you to step back and critically look at the situation at

your church. If possible, bring in an objective third party to help

you see what you can't see because of your proximity. As I have

worked with churches across the country, I have found that I can see

both problems and possibilities in a situation just because I am a

little removed from the day to day ministry of that particular

church. I have been told many times by Pastors that their stress

level was lowered considerably when they established good processes of

connection, care, and retention. This is not one of those problems

for which there is no answer. I believe that any church can guard

their back door if they are serious about it.

Rob Overton

ChurchLead.comRob Overton has a passion to see churches become all

that God has called them to be. He has over 25 years of management and

leadership experience in both the corporate and church environments.

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Preach a Crisp, Clear Gospel Message - Larry Moyer

- 8/2011.101

Preach a Crisp, Clear Gospel Message

Larry Moyer

EvanTell, Inc.

Larry Moyer: "For me, it all starts by communicating ten words:

'Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead.'" Email this

articlePrint FriendlyFor me, it all starts by communicating ten words,

Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. This is the crisp

and effective message that transforms lives and secures our eternal

destiny. There is a power in this Gospel that is awesome. It is

imperative that you are confident in the message you are communicating

and that you communicate it as clearly and simply as possible. As I

often explain, The Bible is 66 books, but the Gospel is ten

wordsChrist died for our sins and rose from the dead. It is the

preaching of the Gospel that makes evangelistic preaching effective.

In order to preach the Gospel, it is crucial that we have a clear

understanding ourselves.

We also need to have a heart to communicate the good news of Christ

to a lost and dying world. You dont just want to preach to your

audience. You want to communicate with them.

Its been said that too many speakers are like Christopher Columbus.

When he started out, he didnt know where he was going. When he got

there, he didnt know where he was. When he got back, he did not know

where he had been. If you understand what you are about to present,

that will not be the situation. What is clear in your mind will become

clear in theirs. To communicate and not just speak, you must

understand that every Gospel message must tell your audience three

things:

1. You are a sinner

2. Christ died for your sins and rose again

3. You have to trust Christ

This way, they know their condition, Gods remedy, and their needto

trust Christ. When those three truths are objectively explained, you

have communicatednot just spoken.

I find that expository evangelistic preaching is very effective in

presenting a crisp, clear Gospel message. Presenting your message in

this fashion allows them to hear what God said first. That way, they

leave knowing that if they have a struggle with what you said, their

struggle is ultimately with God, not you. Gods Word is alive. Thats

why to take a particular text and explain it to lost people in a way

that is powerful and relevant lends force to your message. However, if

you are preaching to reach the lost, dont assume they have a Bible

with them or know where to find the text you are preaching on.

Carefully direct them to the text. Also remember they probably arent

familiar with many stories from the Bible or may not even understand

common Christian terminology, so speak their language.

By the way, that does not mean that every expository message that you

give has to be directed to lost people. But appealing to lost people

through an expositional message directed to believers will be the

subject of a future article. The point Im making is whenever

possible, when you speak to lost people, do it through an expository

message prepared just for them.

Unfortunately, evangelistic speakers too often have a reputation for

being condescending. While we have to explain to people that they are

sinners, we dont have to say it in a way that is pompous. Remember

that we are to preach a Gospel of grace, not guilt. The audience needs

to recognize they are sinners, but also hear that there is hope for

our sinful condition.

When preaching the Gospel message, it is imperative to use repetition.

With the fast‑paced lives we lead, many of us have lost the art of

listening. Repeat whatever is necessary in light of your text, your

situation, and their need. The main thing you repeat is the big idea

in your message. Watch your audience; if they looked confused, restate

things in a different light or use an additional illustration.

As you preach crisp and effective Gospel messages, your enthusiasm for

the Savior must be displayed. Enthusiasm is contagious. Get excited

about the message God has given you to preach and what Christ did on

the cross. If you are not enthusiastic about your Savior, they wont

be interested in knowing Him.

Do the above items guarantee that people will come to Christ? No! But

thats not your responsibility. Your job is to bring Christ to people

through crisp, clear, evangelistic messages. Gods job is to bring

people to Christ. You do your part, and God will do His.

Larry Moyer

EvanTell, Inc.Dr. R. Larry Moyer is a veteran evangelist and a

frequent speaker in evangelistic outreaches, training seminars,

churches and universities around the world. Born with an inherited

speech defect, Larry vowed to God as a teenager that if He would allow

him to gain control of his speech he would always use his voice to

declare the gospel. In 1973, Larry founded EvanTell, where he now

serves as President and CEO. He has written several books on

evangelism and frequently contributes articles to ministry

publications.

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Preaching for Life‑Change - Rick Long

- 10/2011.101

Preaching for Life‑Change

Rick Long

Grace‑Alone.org

Does preaching for life‑change always produce a watered down

message?Email this articlePrint FriendlyJohn MacArthur once addressed

the issue of "Biblically‑Anemic Preaching." Dr. MacArthur boldly

confronted pulpits across America that have abandoned the teaching of

God's Word in exchange for self‑help guides, philosophical remedies

and popular anecdotes that can be as easily discovered by watching any

episode of Dr. Phil or Oprah. I absolutely agree with him when it

comes to his concern about "churches" who have reduced the teaching of

God's Word to nothing more than a highlight during the weekend

services; but I disagree with the degree to which Dr. MacArthur

restricts methodology for preaching the Word of God. Respectfully, I

would like to submit an alternate point of view.

I believe that there is liberty within the body of Christ for a

variety of approaches to teaching the Word of God. After all, the

purpose of the Scriptures is clearly defined in - 2 Timothy

3:16‑17 (NIV) - 2 Timothy 3:16‑17 NIV}. "All Scripture is God‑breathed

and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in

righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for

every good work." As you can see from a close look at the Greek word

"pros," which is translated "for," Scripture is helpful for doctrine,

rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, but these are not

the end‑all purposes. The purpose of Scripture is "so that the man of

God may be mature." The purpose of our preaching and teaching is not

to wow the crowds with our amazing wit or knowledge of Scripture, but

to preach messages that change lives. In - Romans

8:29 - Romans 8:29} we find that the primary purpose for God's Word and

work in our lives is to make us like God's Son, Jesus. What concerns

me about those who believe the only way to teach is verse by verse and

chapter by chapter is that they label preachers as topical, exegetical

or some other label. Let me point out that these labels themselves are

extra‑biblical. When the original letters were written, they had no

chapters and verses; they were sent to be read, understood and

applied. Again, the ultimate purpose for the Word of God is that our

minds be changed so that our obedience is a by‑product of what we have

learned. The goal, and I think Dr. MacArthur would agree with this

point, is not merely head knowledge, but life transformation.

The majority of American Christians know far more Scripture than they

are living out! (This is not to say that the Church is permeated with

biblical literacy. But it is to say that biblical literacy isnt the

sole crisis we facebut rather biblical application of what we do know

is also of great concern.) The bottom line is this: our preaching must

lead to Christ‑like convictions that produce Christ‑like character

which must produce Christ‑like conduct. We are called to be doers of

the Word and not hearers only.

In a recent article, Dr. MacArthur stated:

todays sermons tend to be short, shallow, topical homilies that

massage people's egos and focus on fairly insipid subjects like human

relationships, "successful" living, emotional issues, and other

practical but worldlyand not definitively biblicalthemes.

I dont wish to spend energy defending those who do massage people's

egos, but I can in no way concede the issue of human relationships as

an insipid subject. Human relationships are at the heart of

biblical teaching, regardless of our preaching style.

Let me break it down. Though I preach for nearly 50 minutes every

week, I do believe that the amount of time spent is not nearly as

important as the content of what is said. We see this borne out in

Jesus teaching discourses, the brief parable of the sower as a clear

example of power not being sacrificed for brevity. I have heard some

of the most life‑changing messages that were no longer than ten

minutes.

So I dont find the length of a sermon being proscribed in the Bible.

All Bible‑loving preachers will agree with the dangers of massaging

egos. But I believe Im on solid ground when I defend the value of

preaching biblically on topics that encourage and give hope. (Perhaps

Dr. MacArthur would also affirm this.)

The Bible is filled with hundreds of examples of human relationships

that demonstrate the type of husband, son, employee, friend, relative,

brother, boss and so on that I am called to be, and the passages that

teach me how to live out these responsibilities are just as numerous.

Teaching soundly about these matters is critical. And while I may not

teach in what appears to me as a narrowly‑defined style of preaching,

I believe Im on track in imitating Christ in both my purpose and

manner of preaching.

God help me as I articulate what God has done at our church of 2,300

in Colorado. It is a place where 67 percent of all the members came to

know Christ in and through this church. In 19 years we have grown from

23 curious onlookers to 2,300 (mostly!) active believers. We are

living the purposes of God and reaching out to the community through

52 unique ministries in our church. We have trained 300 churches how

to be active in their community and have become a church to which the

local rescue mission sends their recovering addicts. We are made up of

doctors, lawyers, orthodontists, as well as prostitutes, drug addicts

and criminalspeople who have gloriously come to know Jesus and are

learning to surrender to his Lordship in every area of their lives.

Last year 750 adults came to Christ in our services, yet we do not

take on the label "seeker" church, because I believe God does the

seeking, we're just chucking the seeds. He gets all the glory and he

deserves all the praise. But I share what God has done in our midst to

illustrate that he is active in our church, which operates under a

style some would reject as unbiblical. I just wont concede that!

The truth is, we would never have seen such impact had we regarded

issues of human relationships as being insipid.

In my finite and limited years of experience, I have come to believe

that a "deep" study of the Word of God means that we are called to

live what we read. I have a conviction that preachers must not lose

touch with the culture around us, the very culture with which we have

been called to share the message of Christ. I have no apologies for a

pursuit of relevance.

There are only two types of people who will ever walk through your

doors: your family or your mission field. Each person deserves the

most powerful and persuasive presentation of God's Word we can

provide. If I am teaching on the subject of love, why would I limit

myself to a narrow study of - 1 Corinthians 13:4‑8 - 1

Corinthians 13:4‑8}, when the subject is addressed in 1200 passages in

Scripture? I want the full counsel of God so I may bring light to the

subject, but I compel the hearer to action with a well‑thought‑out

approach and a variety of tools to bring the sermon to life. In a

culture of multimedia as well as church resources around every corner,

it is not just my prerogative to use these toolsbut my duty to use

them. My God deserves the best I can give him, and that is exactly

what we strive for at Grace Church of Arvada.

We see in Scripture an emphasis on application. Romans is 50 percent

application. Ephesians is 50 percent application, Philippians is 100

percent application, and James is over 80 percent application. We are

not just to inform our people, but to preach for transformationand

that is done by application teaching. We use videos and testimonies

almost every week. We utilize examples from pop culture and often deal

with the headlines of the day. People, Christians and non‑Christians

alike, are searching for answers to life's most difficult questions,

and we have the answerit is the Word of God.

My production team, made up of qualified staff members and pastors,

discusses every sermon and every Scripture. We plan every detail of

the weekend and make sure that God's Word is handled correctly and

remains the focus of all we do. We are planned ahead, and I preach

sermons, complete with all the "bells and whistles," to the production

team two‑and‑a‑half weeks before the actual weekend it will be

delivered. This is how careful we are with the Word of Godbut my

approach certainly differs from that of Dr. MacArthur. I consider

myself on his same teamand would value being validated in my approach

rather than being viewed as having somehow compromised God's

Wordthough God is certainly the final judge over all of our

preaching. I believe that there are a variety of approaches or methods

to delivering the message. And as long as God's Word is handled

accurately and with reverence, and as long as lives are being

transformed by the clear Gospel of grace, then God is pleased. I

preach for life change and nothing else. If my people leave on the

weekend and say, "Wow, my pastor is so smart, did you hear the words

he used?", I have failed. But if their week is impacted by changed

behavior as they live for Christ, then I have succeeded.

My fellow pastors, my word to you is this: I pray for you and can

understand the burden you bear every day. God has placed you in the

position youre in and he wants you to preach exactly the way he

created you. Don't try to be someone youre not. Preach the way God

has gifted you. Stay true to your studies and to the Word and lead

your people in its light. I am praying for all of you.

In closing, I want to say that friendly tension is what sharpens our

faith. Dr. MacArthur challenged me in many areas, and I hope I have

done the same for you.

Rick Long

Grace‑Alone.orgRick is the Executive Director, Grace Church of Arvada,

Arvada, CO; Speaker and Workshop Teacher. He founded Grace Church in

1989 and since then he has seen God grow the church exponentially. The

ministry has over 2000 members and is a Purpose Driven Church

committed to the Global glory of God. Rick has been instrumental in

laying the groundwork for Dare 2 Share Ministries in Colorado.

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ong‑preaching‑for‑life‑change‑1060.asp?utm\_source=newsletter&utm\_medium

=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

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2 Simple Tips for New Believer Follow‑Up - Steven Furtick

- 10/2011.101

2 Simple Tips for New Believer Follow‑Up

Steven Furtick

StevenFurtick.com

Steven Furtick shares practical insights for making the most out of

your new believer follow‑up.Email this articlePrint FriendlyI get

asked all the time how we do discipleship at Elevation. Related to

this question, I also get asked how we follow up with new believers.

Do we relentlessly call people until they're in a small group?

Do we offer 57 Bible studies for people to grow in their faith?

Do we provide a yearlong systematic theology course for new believers?

We do have specific and practical things that we do. But when it comes

down to it, our philosophy is pretty straightforward and simple:

1) We point the way and 2) we clear the path.

1) We point the way.

There's ultimately nothing we can do to force people to grow in

Christ. Nothing. So whether we offer a 26‑option discipleship program

or a 4‑option one really doesn't matter. If someone really doesn't

want to grow, they're either going to say no 4 times or 26.

For that reason, we keep it pretty simple.

We give new believers material to help them grow in the initial stages

of their faith, and we call and encourage them to get plugged in. We

constantly stress the importance of small groups. We faithfully

proclaim the Word and encourage people to read it for themselves. In

short, we point the way to what it looks like to have a relationship

with Jesus for themselves.

If they decide not to walk that way, that's their decision. And we've

made the decision that we're not going to chase all of them down if

they do.

Some people might say to this: Is that what Jesus would do?

I don't have to wrestle with that question because it's exactly what

Jesus did. Jesus didn't hook His finger in people's noses to make sure

they were following Him. When you read through the gospels, Jesus

always cast His net extremely wide. Everyone was invited to follow.

But He didn't chase people down if they weren't committed (as in the

case of the rich young ruler).

The call was to follow Him. Not be dragged kicking and screaming

behind Him.

All He did was point the way. To Himself.

2) We clear the path.

This is where our greatest responsibility comes into play. If we've

pointed the way clearly and people are responding, it's our job to

make sure the path is clear for them when they decide to walk on it.

There's no room to drop the ball when it comes to people's spiritual

development. If they're taking a step toward Christ, we've got to make

sure that step lands unobstructed.

In other words, we've got to make sure our systems and processes are

running at full speed. And running efficiently. If someone wants to

get in a small group, we've got to follow up with them quickly. If

someone needs counseling, we need to get them into it right away and

into the best counseling available.

Whatever approach your church uses to pull the maximum God‑given

potential out of people, it really doesn't matter. Whether you take

people through a five‑year development plan or you just put them into

small groups and let the growth happen more organically, your

responsibility is ultimately the same either way:

1) Point the way to Jesus clearly.

2) Clear the path to Him effectively.

Let's commit to doing both with excellence so we can see our people

become all that God has dreamed for them.

Steven Furtick

StevenFurtick.comSteven Furtick is the Lead Pastor of Elevation

Church, an incredible move of God in Charlotte, NC with more than

9,000 in attendance each week among (soon‑to‑be) six locations. He is

the author of the book, Sun Stand Still. He lives in Charlotte with

his wife Holly and their three children, Elijah, Graham and Abbey.

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2 Styles of Preaching - The Strengths and Weaknesses of Two Popular Preaching Styles - Brady Boyd

- 10/2011.101

2 Styles of Preaching

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Two Popular Preaching Styles

Brady Boyd

Newlifeblogs.com/BradyBoyd

Brady Boyd: "I think both approaches have merit for the local church

and it's the job of the pastor to listen to what God is saying and

obey." Email this articlePrint FriendlyPastors tend to spend a lot of

time obsessing about preaching and teaching, while the rest of society

thinks about it, like never. But it's Monday, and I spoke at New Life

yesterday and still wonder if I'm any good (this is the part that is

supposed to motivate you to give me a lot of compliments), but Pam and

the kids thought it was great and that's most important.

Anyway, about a year ago, I underwent a philosophical shift in the way

I preach each week. For years, I was a part of a world that primarily

taught sermon series on various topics for four to six weeks, each

series complete with a cool logo, title and sermon bumper (that is the

trendy video that plays right before the pastor magically appears on

stage).

Strengths of the sermon series approach to preaching:

1. You can tackle topics that are important to the congregation in a

timely way. For example, if marriages seem to be struggling, you can

talk about marriage, etc.

2. You can go deeper on topics that need extra time to teach, like

eschatology (that's a fancy preacher word that means the end times).

Weaknesses:

1. You can skip over the hard topics and just talk about the happy

ones. In other words, we can talk about the blessings without talking

about suffering or sacrifice.

2. You can drain the life out of your creative team trying to be

better or more clever than the last series. Cool one‑word titles can

slide down the cheese hill very quickly. Our title for the teachings

from Luke is Luke.

My approach for the past year has been to walk through books of the

Bible story by story, capturing all the big ideas of the book. I have

preached through Ephesians, 1 Peter, and for the past 30 weeks,

through Luke. I plan to tackle Acts for the first part of 2012.

Strengths of the book approach:

1. You cannot skip over the hard topics. The past two weeks I have

taught out of - Luke 16 - Luke 16}, which focuses on two

difficult topics for most pastorshell and money.

2. Hermeneutics (another fancy word for studying the Bible) is

embraced more completely. Who wrote the passage? To whom was he

talking? Why did he use specific language? What was going on in the

culture at the time?

3. You have to teach on all of the topics and ideas that Jesus and the

apostle's taught their churches and followers. It builds a more

complete disciple in the long run (just my opinion, but it is my

blog).

Weaknesses:

1. Missed opportunities to preach about topics that are trending

socially. For example, on the 10‑year anniversary of 9/11, we were in

- Luke 14 - Luke 14}, which did not contain a ready‑made

memorial message.

2. Missed opportunities to camp out for several weeks on topics that

need deeper explanation.

For the record, I think both approaches have merit for the local

church, and it's the job of the pastor to listen to what God is saying

and to obey. Don't get stuck in a sermon rut. It is possible, and even

probable, that some fresh new ideas may be exactly what all of us

need.

Brady Boyd

Newlifeblogs.com/BradyBoyd/Brady is the lead pastor of New Life Church

in Colorado Springs, CO. He is married to his college sweetheart Pam

and is the dad to two great kids, Abram and Callie. He has just

written a book called Fear No Evil and he's really serious about

caring for the people of Colorado Springs by opening numerous Dream

Centers.

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Update

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Preacher to Preacher: Why Do We Do It? Leslie Holmes

- 10/2011.101

Preacher to Preacher: Why Do We Do It?

Leslie Holmes

Preaching.com

Whether we preach from a manuscript, a 3x5 card, an iPad, or without

notes, preaching is still the primary means through which God hooks a

human soul for salvation.Email this articlePrint FriendlyIf you have

been to seminary, you've most likely gone through a three‑year,

graduate‑level course of studies with at least two unfamiliar

languages, history, philosophy, hermeneutics, homiletics, counseling,

and much more. Have you ever thought you could have given the same

period of time and almost certainly multiplied your earnings, had more

control over your personal life, taken less abuse and probably had

more professional respect as a lawyer, physical therapist, dentist, or

as another type of professional?

In fact, in almost any other course of study, after three years on top

of four years of college, you would have come out with the title

Doctor rather than a master's degree in a field the value of which is

not widely recognized or appreciated beyond the church world. Have

you, as have many others, ever stopped to ask yourself, "Why did I do

that?" If red blood flows through your veins, you know you have! I am

persuaded that all of us have at some point asked ourselves if it is

all worthwhile. After all, they beat up the best preacher who ever

lived and killed Him on a cross.

If you are like me, you have ended up concluding that while there may

be many other things you could have done, you give your life to

preaching the gospel because for you it is a thing called "God's call

on my life," which, let's face it, a whole lot of people don't

understand. Sure, we all could make more money and have more control

of the daily events of our lives, but there is an impelling force

inside us that simply will not let go.

The mighty Paul, no slouch when it comes to scholarship, phrased it

this way: "Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the

gospel!" ( - 1 Cor. 9:16 - 1 Corinthians 9:16}).As I write

these words, the nightly news about a capsized fishing boat and

resultant loss of life off the coast of Mexico brings back memories of

a motion picture I saw recently. The inherent dangers of the fishing

industry, as seen through a crew's eyes, are described in detail in

that movie, The Perfect Storm. Out of their need to bring home the

best possible catch, the captain and crew of the Andrea Gail determine

to risk everything and travel to a remote but fertile fishing ground

called the Flemish Cap. On their way back to port in Gloucester,

Mass., they encounter the perfect storm. Set in 1991, while many

improvements in shipbuilding, navigational instruments, and rescue

support have improved the lot of boating for most people in this age,

the lives of people who make their living fishing are still at risk.

In fact, more fishing crew members lose their lives per capita than in

any other occupation in America.Some things are better than they used

to be, but for the crew of far off‑shore fishing vessels, going to sea

for extended periods of time is not much safer than it was a century

ago. Out there (and I have been on a vessel out there) you are on your

own. Most days, there is nobody else near enough to help. Lack of fear

and an abundance of courage are two lines near the top of a fishing

boat crew member's unwritten job description.

The same is true for those of us who have felt Paul's necessity of

fishing for souls. Technology has improved, electronics have lightened

our load; but the fact is that neither our call has changed nor has

our message. Some of my students come to class with all their books

downloaded on their iPads! I have more than 5,000 books in my library.

These books have become my masters. If I stop preaching, what will I

do with them? Just think, if my seminary students quit, they will not

have to stress about what to do with their library as it all will be

on one device about the size of a single book! Many years ago, William

Sangster, at the time among Britain's leading preachers, confessed

before a preaching conference gathered in his church, "I long to go

into every manse and vicarage in the land and confront the men who

live there with this question: Do you truly believe in preaching as

the primary means by which God brings men to salvation, and therefore

as your primary task, to the accomplishment of which you will devote

your best hours and greatest energies?"

Fifty years after his death, William Sangster's question still has

validity, and every assertion he made is even more urgent in our iPad

world. Whether we preach from a manuscript, a 3x5 card, an iPad, or

without notes, preaching is still the primary means through which God

hooks a human soul for salvation. It is always our primary task, and

we still need to devote to it our best hours and greatest energies. We

never can forget God had but one true Son, and He sent Him to Earth to

be a preacher. He was unwelcome in many places, given a hard time and

beaten. Yet, "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the

cross, despising its shame, and is seated at the right hand of the

throne of God" ( - Heb. 12:2 - Hebrews 12:2}). If we would sit

there among those who are seated beside Him, so must we. That is why

we do it! Isn't that why you do it?

Leslie Holmes

Preaching.comThe Rev. Dr. Leslie Holmes is professor of ministry and

preaching at Erskine Theological Seminary in Columbia and Due West,

SC. A Presbyterian minister, he was most recently senior pastor of

Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church in Augusta, GA.

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Biblical Preaching Is About Life ChangeNot Sermon Form - John Ortberg

- 10/2011.101

Biblical Preaching Is About Life ChangeNot Sermon Form

John Ortberg

The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching

The core value of preaching that changes lives is that its biblical.

You and I dont change lives. God changes lives. For two thousand

years, he has used the power of this Word to convict stubborn hearts

of sin, to move cold spirits to repentance, and to lift faltering

lives to hope.

The question that causes a fair amount of controversy is: What makes

preaching biblical?

Its Not About Form

Often people think what makes preaching biblical is a particular style

or structure. Where I grew up, people talked about three categories

for preaching: topical, often regarded as not very biblical; textual,

where the main point comes from a Scripture verse, which was

considered more biblical; and expository, which is difficult to get a

clear definition of. Expository is a word that gets thrown around a

lot. Some people think of it as verse‑by‑verse preaching, or where

points and subpoints are from one text in Scripture.

There are a number of problems with thinking one particular style or

structure of preaching is the only kind thats biblical. One problem

is Jesus didnt do that kind of expository preaching. Mostly he told

stories and the implications for listeners lives. The apostles didnt

do that kind of expository preaching. In the New Testament you dont

see any sermon that goes verse by verse through an Old Testament text.

Im not saying that kind of preaching is a bad thing. Its important

that people become biblically literate. But what makes preaching

biblical is not its structure. To be biblical does not mean the

preacher follows a particular form that, after all, human beings

created.

Its About Relevance, Application, and Enablement

William D. Thompson, author of Preaching Biblically, writes, Biblical

preaching is when listeners are enabled to see how their world, like

the biblical world, is addressed by the Word of God. It is important

not to be superficial when it comes to what makes preaching biblical.

How many Bible verses a sermon has does not determine whether or not

its biblical. You can have a hundred verses in a sermon and

misinterpret every one of them. It is not the structure. Biblical

preaching occurs when people listen, are able to hear that God is

addressing them as God addressed the world of the Scriptures, and are

enabled to respond.

Far too many sermons have lots of information about the Bible but are

not really biblical preaching because they do not call and enable

people to respond to the Word. There is lots of information about the

Bibleexegetical, historical, or theologicalwith maybe a few

applications tacked on the end.

Its About Working the Soap of the Word Deeply Through the Stained

Fibers of Hearers' Hearts

What happens when the Word addresses people? In Ephesians 5:2526,

Paul has a wonderful metaphor. He says, Husbands, love your wives

just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her in order

to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the

Word. The church is to be made holy by being cleansed with the

washing of the Word. Why do you wash something? Because its dirty.

What happens when you wash something? Soap and water move through the

fibers and lift out impurities from the fabric.

When we and our congregations come before God, our hearts are like

that. They are cluttered with false beliefs and attitudes, misguided

intentions, and wrong perceptions.

I could tell you what a few of mine are. Im walking down the street.

Somebody wants money. I find myself looking away from him because I

dont even want to be reminded of that need, and I dont want to feel

guilty by not giving him something. Or Im at a convenience store in a

line of people, and the person behind the counter doesnt speak

English well, and my reflexive thoughts are, Im in a hurry. Why cant

they get somebody who speaks English well around here? Or another time

Im in church standing next to somebody whos important and the

thoughts that run through my mind are, This is an important person. I

wonder what I might be able to say to make a connection because he or

she is important.

Those are just a few thoughts in my mind that are dirty. They equip me

for bad works. They make bad feelings and behaviors almost inevitable.

Imagine having a mind cleansed of all that. Imagine when youre with

somebody, your first thought is to pray for them and bless them.

Imagine that if youre challenged, your first thought is to look to

God for strength.

Thats what it would be like to have a mind washed by the Word, and

thats your goal for the people to whom you speak. Thats the goal of

biblical preaching. The goal is not to get vast amounts of exegetical

information into people. My goal is not to get people all the way

through the Bible. My goal is to get the Bible all the way through

people.

Biblical preaching answers three questions: What must hearers know,

feel, and do? To do that I ask three questions. What do I want people

to know? What do I want people to feel? What do I want people to do? I

think about these questions for every message I preach because if I

dont address the mind and heart and willif I cant answer those

questionsthen I need not deliver this message because its not going

to wash their minds in the Word.

Your goal is to wash the minds of your people in the Word so that

Christ is formed in them. Thats biblical preaching.

Taken from Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching, The by CRAIG BRIAN

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International. Used by permission of Zondervan. www.zondervan.com

John Ortberg

The Art & Craft of Biblical PreachingJohn Ortberg is teaching pastor

of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California and

author of several books, including The Life You've Always Wanted and

The Me I Want to Be.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/john‑o

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Preaching Class By Dr. Bryan Chapell

- 11/2011.101

Preaching Class ‑ Dr. Bryan Chapell

Preaching

Speaker: Dr. Bryan Chapell

Description

Dr. Bryan Chapell explores the unifying principle of grace that binds

all Scripture together. He outlines and demonstrates the principles

and practice of sermon‑crafting and delivery to illuminate the message

of grace in each passage, and to submit it to God's Spirit for the

transformation of lives through preaching.

Dr.Chapell is helped in this course by Zachary W. Eswine, Assistant

Professor of Homiletics and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program

(BSW, Ball State University; MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary; PhD,

Regent University). Dr. Eswine served as senior pastor of Grace Church

of the Western Reserve in Hudson, Ohio, for six years before joining

Covenant Seminary's faculty in 2001. He has served as a campus

minister with the Navigators, as a church youth director, and as a

chaplain‑evangelist in retirement facilities. Since arriving at the

Seminary, Dr. Eswine has also served as interim pastor for Tates Creek

Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, as advisory pastor for the

Chinese Gospel Church of St. Louis, and as interim pastor for

Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church in St. Louis. He has taught New

Testament in Ukraine and served as a short‑term missionary in the

Caribbean. Dr. Eswine is a gifted preacher and has authored the book

Kindled Fire: How the Methods of C. H. Spurgeon Can Help Your

Preaching and numerous articles on homiletics. In addition, as an

accomplished musician and songwriter, he has recorded three

collections of original songs.

Philosophy and Goals of the Course

1. "Prep and Del" is an introduction to the basics of sermon

construction and delivery. This is not primarily a course on the

theology of preaching, but rather is a practical introduction to the

tools, structures, and concepts that help preachers learn to put a

sermon together. Wives are always welcome to attend Prep and Del to

help husbands now and in the future.

2. Because this course is introductory, certain standards of sermon

construction are taught that I hope you will consider "foundational"

rather than universal. There is not only one "right way" to preach.

However, mastering the methods of this course will help you develop

the tools needed for many kinds of future sermons. Students from many

backgrounds and preaching traditions have found these tools helpful

even as they prepare for other styles in the future. Other methods and

styles will be taught and encouraged in future semesters.

3. You will be asked to present some short oral assignments to the

class in order to: a) begin integrating the information presented in

lectures; b) begin honing your preaching skills; c) and, remove some

of the intimidation of your first preaching experience next semester.

Recommended reading:

Christ‑centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon, 2nd ed.

(Baker, 2005), Bryan Chapell

Holiness by Grace (Crossway, 2001), Bryan Chapell

Between Two Worlds (Eerdmans, 1982), John Stott

Preaching & Biblical Theology (Eerdmans, 1961; rpt. Presbyterian &

Reformed, n.d.), Edmund Clowney

Putting the Truth to Work (Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001), Daniel M.

Doriani

Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Literature (Eerdmans, 2000),

Graeme Goldsworthy

A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (4th ed), John

A. Brodas

Outlines and transcripts may be found at

\webpage{http://www.worldwide‑classroom.com/courses/info/cm099

Curriculum:

CM099\_SG\_Intro.pdf

View the class forum.

Class Outline

Basic issues

Word & Witness The power of God is inherent in the Word. The power of

the Word is manifested in Christ and applied in expository preaching.

(1 hr. 15 min. 15 sec.)

What's the Big Idea? In expository preaching, unity is accomplished

when the elements of a passage are legitimately shown to support a

single major idea that is the theme of a sermon.

(1 hr. 06 min. 49 sec.)

Getting started

Text Selection & Interpretation Tools and rules for selecting and

interpreting texts.

(1 hr. 22 min. 02 sec.)

The Road from Text to Sermon The process of constructing a sermon

that communicates the meaning of the text as well as its application.

(1 hr. 08 min. 45 sec.)

Outlining & Arrangement Outlining provides structure for the truth to

be related.

(1 hr. 17 min. 38 sec.)

Propositions & Main Points A proposition is a theme statement

covering the content of all the main points and including the

introduction as well as an indication of what the rest of the message

will be about.

(57 min. 36 sec.)

Workshop on Homiletical Outlines Harmonizing the propositions and

main points helps the listener follow the development of the ideas in

your sermon.

(58 min. 20 sec.)

Parts of the sermon

Introductions The first five minutes of your sermon are important for

getting people interested enough to listen to the rest.

(1 hr. 14 min. 44 sec.)

Exposition Exposition is shedding some ordinary light on the path

that leads to truth in God's Word.

(1 hr. 17 min. 52 sec.)

Workshop on Sermon Introductions (57 min. 42 sec.)

Sermon Divisions & Development In order to understand the basic

subdivisions of your sermon in expository development, it is important

to it is helpful to see what the specific members of your sermon's

body looks like in standard development.

(1 hr. 16 min. 08 sec.)

Conclusions The conclusion is the high point of the message and

requires careful craftsmanship.

(45 min. 22 sec.)

Classification of Messages

Classification of Messages The three types of sermons are topical,

textual, and expositional.

(22 min. 26 sec.)

Explanation

Explanation "Explanation" is a central component in an exposition

sermon. The purpose of "explanation" is to answer the question, "What

does this text mean?"

(1 hr. 09 min. 03 sec.)

Illustrations

Why to Illustrate Using illustrations can make sermons more effective

because they help people remember the main points and are effective

motivating people.

(48 min. 19 sec.)

How to Illustrate How to create and use illustrations in expository

preaching.

(27 min. 59 sec.)

How to Illustrate (continued) How to create and use illustrations in

expository preaching.

(1 hr. 11 min. 58 sec.)

Application

Application Without application, meaning is hidden. Application is

essential to full exposition.

(1 hr. 03 min. 10 sec.)

Application (continued) Without application, meaning is hidden.

Application is essential to full exposition.

(1 hr. 12 min. 25 sec.)

Other issues

Transitions and Dialogical Method It is helpful to understand how

sermon components and listener involvement can be knit together

through the use of effective transitions and "pulpit dialogue."

(55 min. 11 sec.)

Methods of Sermon Presentation Materials you can take into the pulpit

when you preach can include notes, outlines and manuscripts.

(24 min. 56 sec.)

Voice and Gesture Using your voice and gestures to communicate energy

and enthusiasm with sincerity makes your communication powerful.

(56 min. 25 sec.)

Dress and Style You can deliver your message more effectively by

considering how you dress in a way that identifies with your

congregation.

(20 min. 56 sec.)

Old Friends in New Clothes Changing formally worded outlines to

fundamentally reduced outlines can help you make your main points

concise and memorable.

(49 min. 13 sec.)

Word & Spirit Reading the Bible meaningfully and referring to the

text often while you are preaching helps you demonstrate that the Word

takes priority in your preaching. Preaching is a redemptive and a

supernatural event that depends on the conviction and illumination of

the Holy Spirit.

(1 hr. 02 min. 43 sec.)

Redemptive preaching

A Redemptive Approach to Preaching We are fallen creatures in a

fallen condition and God's redemptive work is making us whole in ways

we cannot by ourselves. Just as every scripture echoes our

incompleteness, it also in some manner signals the Savior's work which

makes us whole.

(1 hr. 09 min. 12 sec.)

Developing Redemptive Messages Using "redemptive lenses" to preach

the whole Bible emphasizes the person and work of Christ as revealed

in all Scripture. This is different than teaching that our

relationship with God is based on our own efforts to be "good."

(1 hr. 14 min. 57 sec.)

Hearing the Application of Redemptive Principles The ultimate goal of

a sermon is not simply proclaiming more duty or doctrine, but

promoting a more dear relationship with God (i.e., love).

(1 hr. 13 min. 49 sec.)

Redemptive Interpretation and Biblical Genre One way to learn how to

apply redemptive principles to a sermon is by listening to a master

preacher do so and then evaluate his message.

(1 hr. 06 min. 57 sec.)

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\webpage{http://www.worldwide‑classroom.com/courses/info/cm099

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10 Preaching Mistakes Everyone Can Avoid - Jared Moore

- 1/2012.101

10 Preaching Mistakes Everyone Can Avoid

Jared Moore

If you want to help your hearers focus on God and think on God when

they leave your sermon, here are 10 things that you CANNOT do

10. Abuse repetition.

There is repetition for emphasis, and then there is repetition for

annoyance. Discern between the two by listening to other preachers.

Perhaps you should ask your wife if you over‑repeat yourself. Wives

are great assets to pastors because they will often tell you the

truth. Church members are often overly kind except for the few

preaching experts in every congregation.

9. Form your own sermon points first, and then find a text to fit your

points.

Rarely will you find a text to fit your points; instead, in order to

make the text fit, you will pluck the text out of context. The text

should form your points, instead of you forcing your points onto a

text. If you force your points on a text, it is impossible for the

Christians in the pew to submit to your teaching and enjoy the Lord

through the specific text you are preaching from. (Granted, you are

probably still preaching truth that is found elsewhere in the Bible;

at least, I hope!)

8. Be overly animated.

Everyone will either enjoy you or be terribly annoyed. If they leave

the service thinking about you, regardless if its positive or

negative, your sermon failed. Remember that the goal of preaching is

to excellently allow the Word of God to stand on its own. So dont be

a distraction.

7. Bore your audience.

Do not talk in a monotone voice. The goal is to allow the Word to

stand on its own, not to make the most wonderful book ever written the

most boring book ever written. You may be so concerned with detracting

from the Word that you just want to stand up and read in a monotone

voice. Dont do it because there is no proof in the Scriptures that

any of the prophets, Christ, or apostles did such things when they

spoke. In other words, when you overly bore so you wont detract from

the Word, you actually detract from the Word, just on the opposite end

of the spectrum. If you are a master of the English language like

Jonathan Edwards, then you may be able to get away with this. If

Edwards had preached like Whitefield, he may not have lead anyone to

the Lord, for souls would have been too mesmerized by him to get to

Christ.

6. Try too hard to be the funny guy.

The goal is to get your hearers to enjoy the Word of God, not to enjoy

you. If they leave thinking what a funny preacher, then you preached

a terrible sermon. The Word of God must be on their heart and mind

when they leave; and if God is not on their mind when they leave, then

they shouldnt be able to lay this at your feet.

5. Preach your opinion or hobbyhorses instead of the text.

How can you excellently allow the Word of God to stand on its own when

you ignore how God the Holy Spirit originally inspired the literary

makeup of the text in its specific historical context? If the Word of

God needs your innovation, then it is no longer the Word of God. The

most powerful interpretation is the interpretation that the text

demands, not what we can speculate, dream up, or spiritualize. If the

text demands spiritualizing, then spiritualize; however, if there is

no warrant from the text, then you do not have authority to

spiritualize. If you spiritualize without textual warrant, then you

are detracting from the text. If your hearers listen and try to enjoy

the Lord through your spiritualizing, and you have gone beyond the

text, then it is impossible for them enjoy the Lord through the text

you are preaching.

4. Use Greek and Hebrew to impress.

Do you know Greek and Hebrew? Do your people know Greek and Hebrew?

If not, then why in the world would you use Greek and Hebrew in your

sermons? Do the exegetical work during your study time; only use Greek

and Hebrew in your sermon whenever it is absolutely necessary in order

to communicate the text. This rule is true: Most pastors whom I hear

using Greek and Hebrew in their sermons do not know Greek and Hebrew,

and most Greek and Hebrew scholars who are pastors do not use Greek

and Hebrew in their sermons. I recommend not using Greek and Hebrew,

because if you do not know Greek and Hebrew, then you will probably

misuse it. Here is a good rule of thumb: prepare and preach your

sermon as if the original author of the Scripture is in your audience.

If he and God the Holy Spirit can say amen to your sermon you have

succeeded, but remember that both of them know what they intended, and

they are fluent in the biblical languages!

3. Ignore the audience.

I preach in a rural church in Kentucky, and if you preach in a church

in a large city, the language that both of us are allowed to use will

be very different. Big theological words are intimidating in my area.

Bywords cannot be said from the pulpit unless you want your people

leaving thinking about the dirty words that you used. If it is

possible that it will offend, then dont use the language! You will

not know this though if you do not consider your audience.

Furthermore, your illustrations should be understandable to your

audience. If you are preaching to the elderly, they will not

understand a reference to the Twilight Saga, Tupac, 50 Cent, etc., but

you can probably reference Johnny Cash. If you are preaching in a

city, farming references may not be easily understood. Consider these

realities when preparing your sermon.

2. Neglect teaching your people to enjoy the Word of God.

Teaching children that the value of the Bible is bound up in its

literary makeup, cool battle stories, or miraculous elements will not

help your audience to truly enjoy the Bible; it will merely help them

to enjoy the genres or stories of Scripture. Any atheist can enjoy

these elements; however, Christians should ultimately enjoy the Word

of God because it is the Word of God.

1. Tell a joke or story that has nothing to do with the text.

Why would you use a joke or story that has nothing to do with the

text? You want your hearers to think on the text, not on something

else. Whenever you detract from the text, you are only doing the Devil

s and their fleshs work for them, because they dont want your

hearers to focus on the text either.

What are your thoughts? What mistakes would you add to the list?

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10 Checkpoints by Terry Linhart

Crafting a Strong Sermon: 10 Checkpoints by Terry Linhart

TerryLinhart.com

- 3/2012.101

Crafting a Strong Sermon: 10 Checkpoints by Terry Linhart

TerryLinhart.com

It's not "10 easy steps" to preaching, but practical help to make sure

your work is sound and true.

I remember the first time I ever preached a sermon in a church. I kid

you not, as I walked up the steps of the platform a series of hidden

emotions surprised me. Scenes like memories from church history

flooded my mind as I neared the podium. I thought of

- Matthew 16 - Matthew 16} when Jesus declared to Peter and

the others the authoritative and missional role his Church would have

in the world. I thought of John Wesley and the circuit riders who

worked so diligently and faithfully to plant churches throughout my

country. And I thought of my dad, a pastor whom I watched minister

faithfully and effectively for years in his local communities. I knew

that I was participating in a rich tradition and taking on a great

responsibility. And I wanted to do my best with that opportunity.

Our society doesnt view being a pastor with the same respect it once

did. This has probably developed due to a variety of reasons, from a

suspicion of authority, inappropriate behavior by pastors, overbearing

leadership style, lack of professionalism, and so forth. But the

pastor is the only person who can show up at any occasion and be

welcomeda wedding, a funeral, a celebration, a lament, a city crisis,

and the like. So I am intrigued by the pastors on Twitter and Facebook

who work to not use the word pastor, but who prefer monikers like

entrepreneurial thinker, thought leader, or lead teacher and

want to focus on words that suggest a detachment from others versus

Christs model of a nurturing shepherd. A pastor. (See Scot McKnight

s post of Brittany Smiths article regarding podcast sermons and

pastors.)

Of course there are many good books on speaking and preaching out

there. But as I recently prepared to speak on a Sunday morning, I

thought of some sermon checkpoints I use to buff a nice luster on what

I do. and to make sure Im responsible and faithful in the process.

1. Pray first and dont quit praying

This actually is independent of what we do; we ought to be about this

all of the time. But purposeful prayer for the sermon process keeps me

mindful that its not about my ability, but about what the Holy Spirit

does.

2. Do your diligent study

I review background materials, read a reliable commentary, use my

Logos software to study the biblical text, and look for common popular

references to the Scripture and topic at hand.

3. Compose a clear teaching aim

After the study, I try to write about a clear aim for the message:

By listening to this sermon, people will (here I pick a word that is

thinking, action, or feeling oriented) ... (and then the content/

result).

4. Organize your outline

This avoids rambling and crafts a clear progression, argument, or

series of thoughts that you can then develop and strengthen. This

provides a necessary framework that serves as a guide to know where

youre going and how youre doing getting there.

5. Create a strong beginning and ending

Like a novelist, a speaker takes listeners on a journey and we speak

to each other in "movies" oftenso create a strong "hook" and make

sure people are with you, that they want to hear what you have to say

next. And cant wait! But perhaps the weakest element of most

sermons I hear is the ending, the so what? element. Most sermons

are content‑heavy, so the speaker feels that the dispensing of

information is sufficient. Wrong. What is is that youre asking them

to do? How do they do that? (This is a very important question to

ask.) Anddoes your ending help you accomplish your teaching aim?

6. Bring life through illustrations

This helps with the novel element of the previous point. So for each

main statement, how can you bring "life" to it, showing people how

your point connects to real life? Not just stories from your past,

not movie clips, but illustrative elements. In fact, you ought to be

changing what you do every seven minutes. I dont always accomplish

this, but I try to make sure every seven minutes I change in some way

by inserting a story, showing media, or drawing an illustration.

7. After letting it sit a day, go through it again

I believe you have to sleep on it for a night and edit it again. This

means you need to be done with your preparations two days in advance!

8. Practice it out loud

Never, never, never skip this step. Always make your ears hear what

your mind tells your mouth to say. Your ears are the best editors you

have. In fact, I tell my students to read their papers out loud

before they hand them in. My dad used to go preach to the pews (or

to the garden in summers) every Saturday night, and that is a

non‑negotiable for me now. I even did it for youth talks on Wednesday

nights. If youre a "professional" and speaking is one of your main

functions, why would you want your "rehearsal" to be your first

service? Never, never, never skip this step.

9. Revise

As your ears tell you where youre weak (i.e., opening, ending,

transitions, too much information packed in), edit, edit, edit. You

may need to practice it again out loud to make sure youve got it

right.

10. Keep praying

Even though we are doing all of the preparations, the final element of

ministry is that we are truly God‑bearers and participating in a

ministry of the Holy Spiritand God grants the "victory"

( - Proverbs 21:31 - Proverbs 21:31}).

Well, those are mine. What did I miss? What process do you employ for

preparing for a good sermon/talk?

Terry Linhart

TerryLinhart.com

Husband & father, educator (Bethel College ‑ Indiana), youth ministry

leader, listener, author, and YSASN coordinator for Youth Specialties.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/terry‑

linhart‑crafting‑a‑strong‑sermon‑10‑checkpoints‑1198.asp

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Rediscovering Expository Preaching.pdf

Richard L. Mayhue

http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj1e.pdf

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REDISCOVERING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Richard L. Mayhue

Vice President and Dean

Professor of Pastoral Ministries

The Master's Seminary

Biblical preaching's authenticity is significantly tarnished by

contemporary communicators' being more concerned with personal relevance

than God's revelation. Scripture unmistakably requires a proclamation

focused on God's will and mankind's obligation to obey. With men wholly

committed to God's Word, the expository method commends itself as

preaching that is true to the Bible. The method presupposes an exegetical

process to extract the God‑intended meaning of Scripture and an explanation

of that meaning in a contemporary understandable way. The biblical essence

and apostolic spirit of expository preaching needs to be recaptured in the

training of men newly committed to "preaching the Word."

\* \* \* \* \*

The Master's Seminary joins with others1 in accepting the

urgent responsibility for transmitting the Pauline legacy to "preach the

Word" (2 Tim 4:2). The current series of articles in The Master's

Seminary Journal signal an effort to instill in twenty‑first century

preachers a pattern of biblical preaching inherited from their

predecessors.2

Every generation shares the kind of dire circumstances that

Amos prophesied for Israel: "`Behold, days are coming,' declares the

1E.g. Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); Walter

C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Exegetical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); John Stott,

Between Two Worlds (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Samuel T. Logan (ed.), The

Preacher and Preaching (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986); Al Fasol,

Essentials for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

2See the initial articles by John F. MacArthur, Jr., "The Mandate of Biblical

Inerrancy: Expository Preaching," The Master's Seminary Journal 1/1 (Spring 1990) 3‑

15 and Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations: The Link Between Inerrancy and

Expository Preaching," The Master's Seminary Journal 1/1 (Spring 1990) 53‑73.

Subsequent issues of the Journal will carry additional essays.

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Lord GOD, `When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for

bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the

LORD'" (Amos 8:11). The last several centuries have proven this need

again.

REVIEWING RECENT TRENDS

In an explanation of Heb 8:10, the Puritan commentator

William Gouge (1575‑1653) remarked,

Ministers are herein to imitate God, and, to their best endeavour, to instruct

people in the mysteries of godliness, and to teach them what to believe and

practice, and then to stir them up in act and deed, to do what they are instructed

to do. Their labor otherwise is likely to be in vain. Neglect of this course is a

main cause that men fall into as many errors as they do in these days.3

To this editorial by Gouge, Charles Spurgeon (1834‑1892) adds a word

about nineteenth‑century England:

I may add that this last remark has gained more force in our times; it is among

uninstructed flocks that the wolves of popery make havoc; sound teaching is the

best protection from the heresies which ravage right and left among us.4

John Broadus (1827‑1895) decried the death of good preaching

in America, too.5 G. Campbell Morgan (1863‑1945) noted,

The supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching. This is a

day in which one of our great perils is that of doing a thousand little things to

the neglect of the one thing, which is preaching.6

The following typical laments evidence that little improvement had been

made by the mid‑twentieth century:

Except for the growing worldliness of its members, the pulpit is the church's

3William Gouge, Commentary on Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1980 rpt.) 577‑78.

4C. H. Spurgeon, "Sermons`Their Matter," Lectures to My Students (Lecture 5, Book

1; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977 rpt.) 72.

5John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (Grand Rapids:

AP&A, n.d.) x.

6G. Campbell Morgan, Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974 rpt.) 11.

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weak spot.7

But the glory of the Christian pulpit is a borrowed glow. . . . To an alarming

extent the glory is departing from the pulpit of the twentieth century. . . . The

Word of God has been denied the throne and given a subordinate place.8

Yet it remains true that "whatever be the marks of the contemporary pulpit, the

centrality of Biblical preaching is not one of them."9

In a tradition that focuses on the centrality of the written Word few subjects are

more important than the interpretation and proclamation of that Word.

Everyone stresses the necessity of a solid exegesis of the text, but few are adept

at providing such an exegesis and preaching effectively from it.10

By the mid‑1980's a national Congress on Biblical Exposition

(COBE) convened to urge a return to true biblical exposition.11 COBE's

recurring theme demanded that the American church must return to

true biblical preaching or else the western world would continue its

descent toward a valueless culture. Commenting on the uniqueness of

America in contemporary culture, Os Guiness noted with concern that

". . . in all my studies I have yet to see a Western society where the

church pews are so full and the sermons so empty."12

John MacArthur's review of preaching patterns in the late 80's

led him to observe,

Specifically, evangelical preaching ought to reflect our conviction that God's

Word is infallible and inerrant. Too often it does not. In fact, there is a

7Jeff D. Ray, Expository Preaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940) 14.

8Merrill F. Unger, Principles of Expository Preaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

1955) 11‑15.

9Nolan Howington, "Expository Preaching," Review and Expositor 56 (Jan 1959) 56.

10Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Exegesis and Preaching: The Principles and Practice of

Exegesis," Covenant Quarterly 34 (Aug 1976) 3. For other comments on the decline of

expository preaching in America, see Lloyd M. Perry Biblical Preaching for Today's

World (Chicago: Moody, 1973) 9‑12.

11Brian Bird, "Biblical Exposition: Becoming a Lost Art?" Christianity Today 30/7

(Apr 18, 1986) 34.

12Ibid.

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discernible trend in contemporary evangelicalism away from biblical preaching

and a drift toward an experience‑centered, pragma‑tic, topical approach in the

pulpit.13

As the 90's dawn, an irresistible urge for a focus in the pulpit on

the relevant seemingly exists, with a resultant inattention to God's

revelation. Siegfried Meuer alerted the 1960's to the same

"contemporary danger."14 He likened the direction of his day to the

earlier trends of Harry Emerson Fosdick who wrote in the 20's, "The

sermon is uninteresting because it has no connection with the real

interests of the people. . . . The sermon must tackle a real problem."15

Meuer noted that Fosdick opened the floodgate for philosophy and

psychology to inundate the modern pulpit with unbelief.

Fosdick's philosophy sounds alarmingly similar to the advice

given in a recent publication on relevant contemporary preaching:

Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like it, but

for every sermon we preach, they're asking, "Am I interested in that subject or

not?" If they aren't, it doesn't matter how effective our delivery is; their minds

will check out.16

The implied conclusion is that pastors must preach what people

want to hear rather than what God wants proclaimed. Such counsel

sounds the alarm of 2 Tim 4:3: "For the time will come when they will

not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they

will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own

desires."

13MacArthur, "The Mandate" 4.

14Siegfried Meuer, "What Is Biblical Preaching?" Encounter 24 (Spring 1963) 182.

15Harry Emerson Fosdick, "What Is the Matter with Preaching?" Harper's Magazine

47 (July 1928) 133‑41.

16Bill Hybels, et al., Mastering Contemporary Preaching (Portland: Multnomah, 1989)

27. A similar comment is, "The wise interpreter begins with a human need today,

and chooses a passage that will enable him to meet this need" (Andrew W.

Blackwood, Expository Preaching for Today [New York: Abingdon‑Cokesbury, 1953]

13).

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What is the necessary response? We assert that it is to rediscover

and reaffirm expository preaching for the coming generation of

preachers facing all the spiritual opportunities and Satanic obstacles of

a new millennium. We agree with Walter Kaiser's appraisal:

Regardless of what new directives and emphases are periodically offered, that

which is needed above everything else to make the Church more viable,

authentic, and effective, is a new declaration of the Scriptures with a new

purpose, passion, and power.17

REVISITING SCRIPTURE

When warnings about a drift away from biblical preaching

sound, the only reasonable response is a return to the scriptural roots

of preaching to reaffirm its essential nature. In a reexamination of the

heritage of biblical proclamation, two elements emerge: the mandates

to preach and the manner of preaching.

Mandates to Preach

The gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation provide many

examples and exhortations to preach the truth in fulfillment of God's

will. As a reminder of the apostolic legacy and a reaffirmation of the

scriptural authority for Bible‑based preaching, five significant

mandates are representative of the larger number of passages.

Matt 28:19‑20 ` "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to

observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end

of the age."

1 Tim 4:13 ` "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to

exhortation and teaching."

2 Tim 2:2 ` "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of

17Kaiser, Exegetical Theology 242.

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many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others

also."

2 Tim 4:2 ` "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

Tit 2:1 ` "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."

Manner of Preaching

In his discussion of khrssv (kryss, "I preach," "I proclaim")

Friedrich notes at least thirty‑three different verbs employed by NT

writers to portray the richness of biblical preaching.18 In the following

discussion, the four most prominent of these are examined briefly.

Kryss sees general use throughout the gospels, Acts, and the

epistles. John the Baptist (Matt 3:1), Jesus (Matt 4:17), and Paul (Acts

28:31) all engaged in the action of preaching as indicated by this verb.

To Timothy, Paul commended this same activity, telling him to preach

the Word (2 Tim 4:2).

Eaggelzv (Euaggeliz, "I preach the gospel") is practically

interchangeable with kryss (Luke 8:1; Acts 8:4‑5). Paul and Barnabas

preached the good news of the Word of the Lord (Acts 15:35).

Martyrv (Martyre, "I testify," "I bear witness") is a legal term

picturing the communication of truth from one who has a first‑hand

knowledge. John the Baptist bore witness to the light (John 1:7‑8) and

John the Apostle testified to the Word of God (Rev 1:2).19

Didskv (didask, "I teach") focuses on the purpose and content of

the message transmitted, without excluding elements of the three

previous verbs. As part of the Great Commission, Jesus commanded

His disciples to teach (Matt 28:20). Paul recommended teaching to

Timothy (1 Tim 6:2; 2 Tim 2:2). Teaching is sometimes associated with

18Gerhard Friedrich, "khrssein, et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) 3:703.

19See Klaas Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," TynBul

29 (1978) 3‑48, for further information on khrssv, eaggelzv, and martyrv.

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kryss (Matt 11:1) and euaggeliz (Acts 5:42). The content of what is

taught focuses on the way of God (Matt 22:16) and the Word of God

(Acts 18:11).20

In addition to these four prominent words, there are many

others that significantly enhance the biblical manner of communicating

God's Word. For example, the Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to

"guide" (or "lead" (dhgv [hodge]) him through Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:31). Paul

"explained" (or "laid out") (ktuhmi [ektithmi]) the kingdom of God (Acts

28:23; cf. 18:26). Paul told Timothy that he was to "entrust" (or

"commit") (paratuhmi [paratithmi]) what he had heard from Paul to

faithful men that they might teach others also (2 Tim 2:2).

Jesus's interaction with the two disciples on the road to

Emmaus adds further dimensions to biblical preaching. He

"explained" (or "interpreted") (diermhnev [diermneu]) the things about

Himself in the OT, from Moses to the prophets (Luke 24:27). They in

turn marveled at the way He had "opened" (or "explained") (dianogv

[dianoig]) the Scriptures (Luke 24:32; cf. 24:45).

A study of additional words such as naggllv (anaggell, "I

announce, declare") (Acts 20:27), naginskv (anaginsk, "I read") (1 Tim

4:13), parakalv (parakale, "I exhort, comfort") (1 Tim 4:13), jhgomai

(exgeomai, "I declare") (Acts 15:12), lalv (lale, "I speak") (John 3:34),

dialgomai (dialegomai, "I discuss, argue") (Acts 17:17), and fuggomai

(phtheggomai, "I utter") would be profitable. Yet this brief survey is

enough to conclude that the one common link in all the biblical terms

in their contexts is a focus on the things of God and Scripture as

exclusively central in the preacher's message. Without question, this

feature alone marks the uniqueness of scriptural preaching. A biblical

and theological content is the sine qua non of NT proclamation.

With this biblical foundation, an identification of the contemporary

mode of NT preaching is possible.

20For an expanded discussion of didskv, see Homer A. Kent, Jr., "A Time to Teach,"

GTJ 1/1 (Spring 1980) 7‑17.

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DEFINING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Discussions about preaching divide it into three types: topical,

textual, and expositional. Topical messages usually combine a series

of Bible verses that loosely connect with a theme. Textual preaching

uses a short text or passage that generally serves as a gateway into

whatever subject the preacher chooses to address. Neither the topical

nor the textual method represents a serious effort to interpret,

understand, explain, or apply God's truth in the context of the

Scripture(s) used.

By contrast, expositional preaching focuses predominantly on

the text(s) under consideration along with its(their) context(s).21

Exposition normally concentrates on a single text of Scripture, but it is

sometimes possible for a thematic/theological message or a

historical/biographical discourse to be expositional in nature. An

exposition may treat any length of passage.

One way to clarify expository preaching is to identify what it is

not:22

1. It is not a commentary running from word to word and verse to

verse without unity, outline, and pervasive drive.

2. It is not rambling comments and offhand remarks about a passage

without a background of thorough exegesis and logical order.

3. It is not a mass of disconnected suggestions and inferences based

on the surface meaning of a passage, but not sustained by a depthand‑

breadth study of the text.

4. It is not pure exegesis, no matter how scholarly, if it lacks a theme,

thesis, outline and development.

5. It is not a mere structural outline of a passage with a few

supporting comments, but without other rhetorical and sermonic

21Horton Davies, "Expository Preaching: Charles Hadden Spurgeon," Founda‑tions

66 (Jan 1963) 14, calls exposition "contextual preaching" to distinguish it from the

textual and topical types.

22These ten suggestions are derived from Faris D. Whitesell, Power in Expository

Preaching (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1963) vii‑viii.

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elements.

6. It is not a topical homily using scattered parts of the passage, but

omitting discussion of other equally important parts.

7. It is not a chopped‑up collection of grammatical findings and

quotations from commentaries without a fusing of the same into a

smooth, flowing, interesting, and compelling message.

8. It is not a Sunday School‑lesson type of discussion that has an

outline of the contents, informality, and fervency, but lacks

sermonic structure and rhetorical ingredients.

9. It is not a Bible reading that links a number of scattered passages

treating a common theme, but fails to handle any of them in a

thorough, grammatical, and contextual manner.

10. It is not the ordinary devotional or prayer meeting talk that

combines running commentary, rambling remarks, disconnected

suggestions, and personal reactions into a semi‑inspirational

discussion, but lacks the benefit of the basic exegetical‑contextual

study and persuasive elements.

Before proceeding further, consider the English word group

"expose, exposition, expositor, expository." According to Webster, an

exposition is a discourse to convey information or explain what is

difficult to understand.23 Application of this to preaching requires that

an expositor be one who explains Scripture by laying open the text to

public view in order to set forth its meaning, explain what is difficult

to understand, and make appropriate application.

John Calvin's centuries‑old understanding of exposition is very

similar:

First of all, Calvin understood preaching to be the explication of Scripture.

The words of Scripture are the source and content of preaching. As an

expositor, Calvin brought to the task of preaching all the skills of a humanist

scholar. As an interpreter, Calvin explicated the text, seeking its natural, its

true, its scriptural meaning. . . . Preaching is not only the explication of

23Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam‑Webster,

1988) 438.

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Scripture, it is also the application of Scripture. Just as Calvin explicated

Scripture word by word, so he applied the Scripture sentence by sentence to the

life and experience of his congregation.24

Exposition is not so much defined by the form of the message as

it is by the source and process through which the message was formed.

Unger poignantly captures this sense:

No matter what the length of the portion explained may be, if it is handled in

such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the

particular Biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the over‑all context of

Scripture is made plain and applied to the present‑day needs of the hearers, it

may properly be said to be expository preaching. . . . It is emphatically not

preaching about the Bible, but preaching the Bible. "What saith the Lord" is the

alpha and the omega of expository preaching. It begins in the Bible and ends in

the Bible and all that intervenes springs from the Bible. In other words,

expository preaching is Bible‑centered preaching.25

Two other definitions of exposition help clarify what it is:

In preaching, exposition is the detailed interpretation, logical amplification, and

practical application of a passage of Scripture.26

At its best, expository preaching is "the presentation of biblical truth, derived

from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, Spirit‑guided study of a

passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies first to the life of the

preacher and then through him to his congrega‑tion."27

24John H. Leith, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its

Significance for Today in the Light of Recent Research," RevExp 86 (1989) 32, 34.

25Merrill F. Unger, Principles 33. See also William G. Houser, "Puritan Homiletics:

A Caveat," CTQ 53/4 (Oct 1989) 255‑70. Houser proposes that the power of the

Puritan pulpit diminished as the mechanical form of the message took precedence

over the process of forming the message. Coupled with boring deliveries and

exceedingly long messages, Puritan preaching influence quickly declined when these

factors became dominant.

26Ray, Expository 71.

27Hadden W. Robinson, "What is Expository Preaching?" BibSac 131 (Jan‑Mar 1974)

57. For other definitions, see Broadus, On the Preparation 119‑20 and J. Ellwood

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In summary, the following minimal elements identify

expository preaching:

1. The message finds its sole source in Scripture.28

2. The message is extracted from Scripture through careful exegesis.

3. The message preparation correctly interprets Scripture in its

normal sense and its context.

4. The message clearly explains the original God‑intended meaning

of Scripture.

5. The message applies the Scriptural meaning for today.

The spirit of expository preaching is exemplified in two biblical

texts:

And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense

so that they understood the reading (Neh 8:8).

Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God (Acts

20:26‑27).

A particular example is Jesus' expounding of Isa 61:1‑2 in the

synagogue (Luke 4:16‑22). He later gave a thematic exposition of

Himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27, 32, 44‑47).

Philip in Acts 8:27‑35 expounded Isa 53:7‑8 for the Ethiopian eunuch.

Stephen preached a historical/biographical expository sermon to the

Jews before they stoned him (Acts 7:2‑53).

Greer Boyce has aptly summarized this definition of expository

Evans, "Expository Preaching," BibSac 111 (Jan‑Mar 1954) 59.

28R. B. Kuiper, "Scriptural Preaching," The Infallible Word (3rd rev. ed., ed. by Paul

Wooley; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967) 253, asserts strongly,

Exposition of Scripture, exposition worthy of its name, is of the very essence

of preaching. It follows that it is a serious error to recommend expository

preaching as one of several legitimate methods. Nor is it at all satisfactory,

after the manner of many conservatives, to extol the expository method as

the best. All preaching must be expository. Only expository preaching can

be Scriptural.

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preaching:

In short, expository preaching demands that, by careful analysis of each text

within its immediate context and the setting of the book to which it belongs, the

full power of modern exegetical and theological scholarship be brought to bear

upon our treatment of the Bible. The objective is not that the preacher may

parade all this scholarship in the pulpit. Rather, it is that the preacher may

speak faithfully out of solid knowledge of his text, and mount the pulpit steps

as, at least, "a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the

word of truth."

The preacher's final step is the most crucial and most perilous of all. It is to

relate the biblical message both faithfully and relevantly to modern life. At this

point all his skill as a craftsman must come into play. We must be warned that

faithful exposition of a text does not of itself produce an effective sermon. We

need also to be warned, however, that faithfulness to the text is not to be

sacrificed for the sake of what we presume to be relevancy. This sacrifice too

many modern preachers seem willing to make, producing, as a result, sermons

that are a compound of moralistic advice, their own unau‑thoritative and

sometimes unwise opinions, and the latest psychology. Expository preaching,

by insisting that the message of the sermon coincide with the theme of the text,

calls the preacher back to his true task: the proclamation of the Word of God in

and through the Bible.29

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPOSITORY PROCESS

Discussing the biblical foundations and the definition of expository

preaching, while essential, is relatively easy. The real challenge

comes when one has to move from the classroom to the weekly pulpit.

Unless the preacher understands clearly the expository process, he

will never achieve his potential in the craft of expository preaching.

As a frame of reference for discussion, we propose that the

expository process include four standard elements: preparing the

expositor, processing and principlizing the biblical text(s), pulling the

expository message together, and preaching the exposition. The four

29Greer W. Boyce, "A Plea for Expository Preaching," CJT 8 (Jan 1962) 18‑19.

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phases need equal emphasis if the exposition is to be fully effective in

the sight of both God and the congregation.

Preparing the Expositor30

Since God should be the source of expository messages, one

who delivers such a message should enjoy intimate communion with

God. This is the only way the message can be given with greatest

accuracy, clarity, and passion.

Seven areas of preparation qualify a man to stand in the pulpit

and declare, "Thus saith the Lord!":

1. The preacher must be a truly regenerated believer in Jesus Christ.

He must be a part of God's redeemed family (John 1:12‑13). If a

man is to deliver a personal message from the Heavenly Father

effectively, he must be a legitimate spiritual son, or the message

will inevitably be distorted.

2. The preacher must be appointed and gifted by God to the

teaching/preaching ministry (Eph 4:11‑16; 1 Tim 3:2). Unless a

man is divinely enabled to proclaim, he will be inadequate,

possessing only human ability.31

3. The preacher must be inclined and trained to be a student of God's

Word. Otherwise, he cannot carry out the mandate of 2 Tim 2:15

to "cut straight" the Word of God's truth.

4. The preacher must be a mature believer who demonstrates a

consistent godly character (1 Tim 3:2‑3).32

5. The preacher must be dependent upon God the Holy Spirit for

divine insight and understanding of God's Word (1 Cor 2:12‑13).

30D. Martyn Lloyd‑Jones devotes a whole chapter to this subject (Preaching and

Preachers [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972] 100‑20).

31James Stalker, The Preacher and His Models (New York: Hodder and Stoughton,

1891) 95‑99; cf. also John Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching (Grand Rapids:

Baker, 1990) 37‑46.

32Louis Goldberg, "Preaching with Power the Word `Correctly Handled' to

Transform Man and His World," JETS 27/1 (Mar 1984) 4‑5.

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Without the Spirit's illumination and power, the message will be

relatively impotent.33

6. The preacher must be in constant prayerful communion with God

to receive the full impact of the Word (Ps 119:18). The obvious one

to consult for clarification is the original author.34

7. The preacher must first let the developing message sift through his

own thinking and life before he can preach it. Ezra provides the

perfect model: "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the

LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances

in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Processing and Principlizing the Biblical Text

A man in tune with God's Spirit and Word is ready to begin a

process to discover not only what God originally meant by what He

said, but also appropriate principles and applications for today.35

1. Processing the biblical text36 ` A man cannot hope to preach effectively

without first having worked diligently and thoroughly

through the biblical text. This is the only way the expositor can

acquire God's message. Two preachers from different eras

comment on this essential feature:

A man cannot hope to preach the Word of God accurately until he has first

engaged in a careful, exhaustive exegesis of his text. Herein lies the problem,

33Kaiser, Exegetical Theology 236.

34Charles H. Spurgeon wrote, "If you do not understand a book by a departed

writer you are unable to ask him his meaning, but the Spirit, who inspired Holy

Scripture, lives forever, and He delights to open the Word to those who seek His

instruction" (Commenting and Commentaries [New York: Sheldon and Company, 1876]

58‑59).

35Nicholas Kurtaneck, "Are Seminaries Preparing Prospective Pastors to Preach the

Word of God?" GTJ 6/2 (Fall 1985) 361‑71.

36Specifics of the exegetical process will be outlined in a forthcoming essay in The

Master's Seminary Journal. See Snodgrass, "Exegesis" 5‑19 for a basic nine‑step

approach.

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for competent exegesis requires time, brain power, "blood, sweat, and tears," all

saturated with enormous doses of prayer.37

You will soon reveal your ignorance as an expositor if you do not study;

therefore diligent reading will be forced upon you. Anything which compels the

preacher to search the grand old Book is of immense service to him. If any are

jealous lest the labor should injure their constitutions, let them remember that

mental work up to a certain point is most refreshing, and where the Bible is the

theme toil is delight. It is only when mental labor passes beyond the bounds of

common sense that the mind becomes enfeebled by it, and this is not usually

reached except by injudicious persons, or men engaged on topics which are

unrefreshing and disagreeable; but our subject is a recreative one, and to young

men like ourselves the vigorous use of our faculties is a most healthy exercise.38

2. Principlizing the biblical text ` Preaching does not stop with

under‑standing ancient languages, history, culture, and customs.

Unless the centuries can be bridged with contemporary relevance

in the message, then the preaching experience differs little from a

classroom encounter. One must first process the text for original

meaning and then principlize the text for current applicability.39

One's study falls short of the goal if this step is omitted or slighted.

Pulling the Expository Message Together

At the third stage the expositor has finished his deep study and

asks himself, "How can I blend my findings in such a way that my

flock will understand the Bible and its requirements for their lives

today?" In a sense, the art of exposition commences here.40

37John A. Sproule, "Biblical Exegesis and Expository Preaching" (unpublished

lecture at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind., 1978) 1.

38Spurgeon, Commenting 47.

39H. Cunliffe‑Jones wrote, "We must be able to say not only `This is what this

passage originally meant,' but also `This passage is true in this particular way for us

in the twentieth century.'" ("The Problems of Biblical Exposition," ExpTim 65 [Oct

1953] 5).

40It is helpful to distinguish between a sermon, a homily, and an exposition.

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Nolan Howington uses a graphic description to relate exegesis

and exposition: "Thus an exegete is like a diver bringing up pearls

from the ocean bed; an expositor is like the jeweler who arrays them in

orderly fashion and in proper relation to each other."41

Titles, outlines, introductions, illustrations, and conclusions

enter the process at this stage. The message moves from the raw

materials mined by exegesis to the finished product of exposition,

which the hearers hopefully will find interesting, convicting, and

compelling. The key to this step is remembering what distinguishes

exposition: explain‑ing the text, especially parts that are hard to

understand or apply. It is equally important to remember not only the

text, but the audience as well.

F. B. Meyer offers this advice when thinking of the listeners and

what sermonic form the message will take:

There are five considerations that must be met in every successful sermon.

There should be an appeal to the Reason, to the Conscience, to the Imagination,

to the Emotions, and to the Will; and for each of these there is no method so

serviceable as systematic exposition.42

Preaching the Exposition

The final decision to be made by the expositor relates to his

preaching mode, whether from memory or from notes. This step is

perhaps the most neglected in preparation by those committed to true

exposition. Too often expositors assume that proper work done in the

study will ensure that the pulpit will care for itself. It is true that there

"Homily" comes from the Greek mola which, like the Latin sermo, means

"conversation" or "talk." The Latin word is the basis of the English "sermon," so in a

general sense, all three are the same. For the purpose of this article, however, we

choose to use the phrase "expository message" or "exposition" so that its source,

process, and purpose are unmistakably distinguishable from the other two terms.

41Howington, "Expository" 62.

42F. B. Meyer, Expository Preaching Plans and Methods (New York: George H. Duran

Company, 1912) 100.

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is no substitute for hard work in the study, but equally hard work in

the pulpit will reward both the preacher and the flock to a much

greater degree. James Stalker effectively draws attention to this

challenge:

Ministers do not get enough of result in the attention, satisfaction and delight of

their hearers for the work they do; and the failure is in the vehicle of

communication between the study and the congrega‑tion`that is to say, in the

delivery of the sermon. What I am pleading for is, that there should be more

work to show for the coal consumed.43

At the point of delivery, it is essential for the expositor to be

clear in his purpose. Otherwise, the message preached may be far

afield from the message studied and the message of Scripture. J. I.

Packer makes this point by contrasting what preaching is not with

what it is:

The purpose of preaching is not to stir people to action while bypassing their

minds, so that they never see what reason God gives them for doing what the

preacher requires of them (that is manipula‑tion); nor is the purpose to stock

people's minds with truth, no matter how vital and clear, which then lies fallow

and does not become the seed‑bed and source of changed lives (that is

academicism). . . . The purpose of preaching is to inform, persuade, and call

forth an appropriate response to the God whose message and instruction are

being delivered.44

Also of importance is the language used in communicating the

message. It should be clear, understandable, picturesque, and most of

all, biblical. The following strong warning issued over twenty years

ago is still applicable:

I urge adherence to Biblical terminology. Much modern preaching has taken a

psychological and sociological turn. It is mysterious and mystical. It sets forth

43Stalker, The Preacher 121.

44J. I. Packer, "Why Preach?" The Preacher and Preaching (Samuel T. Logan, ed.;

Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986) 9.

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psychiatric ideas, often using the terms of the psychiatrist rather than those of

the Christian evangelist. It speaks of repression, fixations, traumas, neuroses,

and syndromes, world without end. I claim that in the main these are not terms

that the Holy Spirit can use effectively.45

Another crucial matter is the dynamics of speech, i.e. audience

relationship and communicative effectiveness. Vines and Allen outline

three basic principles for every expositor:

In short, effective communication from the pulpit must be informed by

Aristotle's rhetorical triad of logos, ethos, and pathos. This involves a thorough

knowledge of the subject matter and here is where there is no substitute for

thorough exegesis. It involves a thorough knowledge of the speaker‑audience

dynamic such that the preacher must speak from integrity and his audience must

know of his sincerity and genuineness. Finally, it involves a knowledge of

people and how they respond to the spoken word.46

Above all, the expositor must expound the Word like Paul did

in Corinth (1 Cor 2:1‑5). He did not come as a clever orator or

scholarly genius; he did not arrive with his own message; he did not

preach with personal confidence in his own strength. Rather, Paul

preached the testimony of God and Christ's death, and this, with wellplaced

confidence in God's power to make the message life‑changing.

Unless this kind of wholesale dependence on God marks the modern

expositor's preaching, his exposition will lack the divine dimension

that only God can provide.

In summary, of the four steps of the complete expository

experience`preparing the expositor, processing and principlizing the

biblical text, pulling the expository message together, and preaching

the exposition`no phase can be omitted without seriously jeopardizing

the truthfulness or usefulness of God's Word mediated through the

expositor.

45William W. Ayer, "The Art of Effective Preaching," BibSac 124 (Jan‑Mar 1967) 41.

46Jerry Vines and David Allen, "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and Proclamation,"

Criswell Theological Review 1/2 (Spring 1987) 333‑34.

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CONSIDERING EXPOSITIONAL ADVANTAGES47

Expository preaching best emulates biblical preaching both in

content and style. This is the chief benefit. Besides this, other

advantages listed in random order include the following:

1. Expositional preaching best achieves the biblical intent of

preaching: delivering God's message.

2. Expositional preaching promotes scripturally authoritative

preaching.

3. Expositional preaching magnifies God's Word.

4. Expositional preaching provides a storehouse of preaching

material.

5. Expositional preaching develops the pastor as a man of God's

Word.

6. Expositional preaching ensures the highest level of Bible

knowledge for the flock.

7. Expositional preaching promotes thinking and living biblically.

8. Expositional preaching encourages both depth and

comprehensive‑ness.

9. Expositional preaching forces the treatment of hard‑to‑interpret

texts.

10. Expositional preaching allows for handling broad theological

themes.

11. Expositional preaching keeps preachers away from ruts and

hobby horses.

12. Expositional preaching prevents the insertion of human ideas.

13. Expositional preaching guards against misinterpretation of the

biblical text.

14. Expositional preaching imitates the preaching of Christ and the

apostles.

15. Expositional preaching brings out the best in the expositor.

47James W. Alexander, Thoughts on Preaching (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust,

1988 rpt.) 228‑53, develops some of these advantages in more detail.

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RECLAIMING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

As the twentieth century sets and a new millennium dawns, we

must reclaim the method and art of expository preaching for the

coming generation. No one said it would be easy. It is quite the

opposite. No other method of preaching requires so much work. At

the same time, no other method rewards so richly.

If the suggestions which have been offered are well founded, it will be obvious

that expository preaching is a difficult task. It requires much close study of

Scripture in general, and much special study of the particular passage to be

treated. To make a discourse which shall be explanatory and yet truly

oratorical, bearing a rich mass of details but not burdened with them, full of

Scripture and abounding in practical applications, to bring even dull,

uninformed, and unspiritual minds into interested and profitable contact with an

extended portion of the Bible`of course, this must be difficult.48

While the growing trend among today's preachers is toward

consumer satisfaction and contemporary relevancy, we reaffirm that

biblical preaching must be first directed toward divine satisfaction and

kingdom relevance. Reflect carefully on Mark Steege's clarion call to

expositional preaching and its note of biblical authority:

Through our preaching the Lord seeks to change men's lives. We are to be

evangelists, to awaken men to their high calling in Christ. We are to be heralds,

proclaiming the messages of God to men. We are to be ambassadors, calling

men to be reconciled to God. We are to be shepherds, nourishing and caring for

men day by day. We are to be stewards of the mysteries of God, giving men the

proper Word for their every need. We are to be witnesses, telling men of all

that God has done for them. We are to be overseers, urging men to live their

lives to God. We are to be ministers, preparing men to minister with us to

others. As we reflect on each of these phases of our work, what emphasis each

gives to the importance of preaching! What a task the Lord has given us!49

48Broadus, On the Preparation 124.

49Mark J. Steege, "Can Expository Preaching Still Be Relevant in These Days?" The

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Although R. L. Dabney wrote over a century ago, we join him

today in urging,

. . . that the expository method (understood as that which explains extended

passages of Scripture in course) be restored to that equal place which it held in

the primitive and Reformed Churches; for, first, this is obviously the only

natural and efficient way to do that which is the sole legitimate end of

preaching, convey the whole message of God to the people.50

Springfielder 34 (Mar 1971) 261.

50Robert L. Dabney, Sacred Rhetoric (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979 rpt.)

78‑79.

http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj1e.pdf

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How to Plan a Preaching Calendar - Josh Reich

- 8/2011.101

How to Plan a Preaching Calendar

Josh Reich

MissionalThoughts.wordpress.com

Josh Reich: "How we plan our preaching calendar at Revolution is one

of the most common questions I get from other pastors."Email this

articlePrint FriendlyHow we plan our preaching calendar at Revolution

is one of the most common questions I get from other pastors.

Plan ahead

I am stunned by how little planning goes into some churches. You would

think that pastors dont care what is happening in their churches. I

am a planner, so this is easier for me and actually more comforting

when it is done. For example, the other day, I talked to a pastor who

said, Its Thursday, and all I have is a title. Thats like saying,

All I need is a chip and a chair. We need better odds than that when

it comes to preaching. Now before you get on my case, God does speak

at the end of the week, God does change what we are to say while we

are walking up to the stage. It has happened to me, and it is exciting

and scary all at the same time, but this cannot be our normal

practice.

At Revolution, we have decided that the best way for us to reach our

mission and target is to preach through books of the Bible. This does

not mean we are against topical preaching; we just like doing it this

way.

We split series up into two categories: attractional and missional.

Attractional will feel more topical, felt needs but are based on a

book of the Bible. Some examples are the Song of Solomon and the

Sermon on the World. The other category is missional, which tends to

be more formation, doctrine, theology. Some examples are Jonah and

Hebrews.

We also try to alternate between Old and New Testament books of the

Bible. What we are trying to do is to make sure we are giving our

church a healthy balance not only of books of the Bible but also

styles and feel. One other thing that we preach on every year is

marriage, dating, and relationships. For our target and culture, we

feel this makes sense.

What about length?

We havent bought into doing a 36 week series only. Hebrews took 18

weeks, and Nehemiah will take 22 weeks. For the Sermon on the Mount,

we decided to break it up into four smaller series to create more

on‑ramps for our church and guests this fall. The length of the series

is not that big of a deal as long as the speaker is up for it. Long

series are draining. We try to stay away from doing long series back

to back as that is draining on me, our team, and our church. After the

serious feel of Hebrews, we did a video teaching series with Dave

Ramsey, which felt completely different.

How far out do we plan?

We look about 12 months ahead when it comes to thinking through

topics. This is where so many pastors do themselves a disservice. The

other day, I was reading a leadership book, and the author was quoting

and pointing to the book of Nehemiah all over the place. Without

knowing that I wanted to preach through this book, I would have missed

a ton of great information. Could I have remembered it and gone back

to it? Sure, but that is risky.

My point: plan ahead in some way. By planning ahead, we are able to do

a lot more creatively as opposed to going week to week.

Are we flexible?

Yes. Just because we are planning something does not mean it is

written in stone and unchangeable. Over the summer, we were actually

planning to preach through Habakkuk but decided about four weeks out

to do the life of Elijah instead, which proved to be the right move.

Before making the change though, our creative team let me know we had

not gone far enough into the creative process for that series. It is

important to not waste your teams time.

For our creative process, we look 68 weeks out as we think through

atmosphere, visuals, video clips, dramas, cover songs. As we get

closer, Paul takes us through a process of honing in on what we will

use and how it will flow.

How long would this take? Not very long. In fact, if you sat down

right now and made a list of topics you would like to teach on in the

next 612 months, you would be well on your way.

When I started preaching through books of the Bible, I picked James to

start out with because it was my favorite book of the Bible. Not very

spiritual, I know, but it worked, and I started to get used to it.

The point is, plan ahead. Way too much is at stake to go week to week.

Now Ive told you how we do it, how do you plan your series? How do

you decide what to preach on?

Josh Reich

MissionalThoughts.wordpress.comJosh Reich is the lead pastor of

Revolution Church in Tucson, AZ, which is trying to live out the

rhythms of Jesus. The church's dream is to "help people find their way

back to God."

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/josh‑r

eich‑how‑to‑plan‑a‑preaching‑calendar‑957.asp?utm\_source=newsletter&utm

\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=BetterPreachingUpdate

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How to Teach Old Testament Characters - J.D. Greear

- 8/2011.101

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J.D. Greear

JDGreear.com

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hopelessly moralistic, giving us merely examples to emulate rather

than a Savior to adore and hope in." Email this articlePrint

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The Search for a King, and I thought Id use that to offer some

reflection here on how I have learned (and am learning) to teach

through Old Testament characters in Gospel‑faithful ways.

We discover that the life of David occurs in the midst of a quest

Israel was on to find a king. Israel yearned for a king who could give

them stability, guarantee their prosperity, and ensure their security.

Saul seemed like the perfect choice for Israel. He was a good leader,

charismatic and promised to provide Israel with everything they

desired. In the end, of course, he bitterly disappointed them.

The next king God gave to them was of a fundamentally different type.

He was, literally, the last guy in a room of seven brothers whom youd

choose to be king. He was small. Unimpressive. He smelled like sheep.

But he had a mighty trust in God. Because of that, he would point

Israel consistently to hope in God as their true King. David was Gods

choice to be Israels king, because God was Davids choice to be King.

Even David, however, would disappoint Israel, and bitterly. Davids

life ends as a string of tragic failuresan adulterous, murderous

relationship with Bathsheba, severe parental failure with Absalom, and

the blasphemous sin of counting of the people in opposition to Gods

instructions. In one of Israels most crucial hours, David failed them

as a husband, father, and leader. Davids life ends with 70,000

Israelites dying for his sin, with David wishing he could die in their

place but unable to.

Davids life, however, points us forward to another King who was

comingthe Messiahwho was in some ways like David, but in many more

ways unlike him. Unlike David, who sent innocent Uriah to die to cover

up Davids own sin, Jesus, the truly innocent one, would die for ours.

Unlike David, who neglected Absalom his son when Absalom needed him

most, Jesus would pursue us, His children, even when it cost Him His

life. And unlike David, whose people had to die for his sin, Jesus

would die for ours.

Jesus was the truer and better David, the real Hope of Israel.

The truth is that all of us, like Israel, are searching for some type

of King. We long for something to give us prosperity, stability, a

sense of meaning, and security. Davids life shows us that all kings

but Jesus will disappoint. Jesus is the King they were searching for,

and the one we are searching for as well.

The main purpose of Davids story, or that of any Old Testament hero,

is not to give us an example to emulate, but to point us forward to

the Messiah who is coming. Old Testament characters often gave signs

and pictures of what the Messiah was like, but just as often showed us

what He would be like in how they failed. He would do what they, being

mere men and women, were never able to do.

Most approaches to Davids life tell you, Do you want to be a man

after Gods own heart? Then be humble like David. Be courageous

against your giants like David was against Goliath. Forgive your

enemies like David forgave Saul. If you do these things, God will feel

about you like He did about David.

David certainly is, in some ways, worthy of our emulation

( - 1 Cor 10:6 - 1 Corinthians 10:6}). Yet he failed in some of

the most important ways. Jesus, the Messiah, is the hero in Davids

story. He succeeded where David failed. And He gave His perfect life

for us so that when we fail we could be forgiven and accepted. Gods

favor is a gift that is given to us because of what Christ did for us,

not what we are to do for God. That knowledge is what gives us real

courage, real humility, and real generosity. Jesus was the real Man

after Gods own heart, and He gave us His position before the Father

as a gift.

Interestingly, almost all of the Old Testament stories end like David

s didwith a befuddling sense of disappointment. Moses, the Lawgiver,

is not allowed to go into the Promised Land because he broke the laws

of God. The Temple that Ezra builds is so second rate that people who

remembered the first one wept when they saw it. David, Israels

greatest king, turns out to be a desperate sinner who cant even save

himself, his family, or his people. At the end of his life he repeats

all of Israels sins and laments his inability to save them.

The whole message of the Old Testament is that we need a Lawgiver who

not only keeps the laws Himself but can redeem us when we break them;

we need someone to build a glorious, eternal kingdom that not even our

sin can tarnish; we need a Shepherd who will not abuse his sheep but

die for them; we need a Father who will not neglect his children but

will lay down his life for them; we need a King who will not use His

people but serve them. That role cant be filled by Moses or Nehemiah

or David; its only filled by Jesus Christ, Gods Son and Gods

appointed King.

He is the King we are searching for. And that is good news for many of

us who have lost our way and made a mess of our lives, because that

means we can hope in His work on our behalf. He can rebuild our lives

where we have destroyed them. He can give hope where we feel hopeless.

God is not looking for our perfect record; He is looking for us to

receive the gift of salvation He provides. And that means that the

same God that saved and used David is the God who can save and use us.

I believe most contemporary teaching on Old Testament stories is

hopelessly moralistic, giving us merely examples to emulate rather

than a Savior to adore and hope in.

J.D. Greear

JDGreear.comJ.D. Greear, Ph.D. is Lead Pastor at the Summit Church in

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Best Tone for Preaching - What's the Best Tone for Your Preaching? John Piper

- 8/2011.101

Best Tone for Preaching

What's the Best Tone for Your Preaching?

John Piper

Desiring God

"The question I have for preachers is: What tone should you aim at in

preaching? This is an urgent question because, if you don't answer it,

your listeners will answer it for you."Email this articlePrint

FriendlyPhillips Brooks, who died in 1893and who, along with Jesus,

Paul, John Stott, Dick Lucas, and other preachers, never marriedmost

famously said that preaching is truth through personality.

This personality factor raises the question of preaching tone. What

should a preacher aim at in the tone of his preaching?

By tone, I mean the feel that it has. The spirit it emits. The

emotional quality. The affectional tenor. The mood.

Personalities Are Like Faces

Every personality has a more or less characteristic tone. That is part

of what personality is. Some personalities play a small repertoire of

emotional instruments, while others play a larger repertoire.

Nevertheless, whether a personality plays a two‑piece band or a

symphony of emotional tones, there is a typical tone. A kind of

default tone for each personality.

This has a huge effect on peaching. And there is no escaping it.

Preachers have personalities, like they have faces. They can smile,

and they can frown. But they have one face. It was given to them.

The question I have for preachers is: What tone should you aim at in

preaching? This is an urgent question because, if you dont answer it,

your listeners will answer it for you.

The Tone of the Text

Over my 31 years in the pulpit, I have received a fairly steady stream

of affirmation and criticism related to the tone of my preaching. The

very same sermon can elicit opposite pleas. More of that, pastor!

No, we already get too much of that.

This is totally understandable. Listeners have personalities, too.

Which means they have default tonal desires. They have preferences.

They know what makes them feel loved. Or encouraged. Or hopeful. Or

challenged. And some people feel challenged by the very tone that

makes another feel angered or discouraged.

So I ask again: What tone should you aim at in preaching?

My answer is: Pursue the tone of the text. But let it be informed, not

muted, by the tonal balance of Jesus and the apostles and by the

gospel of grace.

Ten explanatory comments:

1.Texts have meaning, and texts have tone. Consider the tonal

difference between Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden .

. . and Woe to you, blind guides . . .You blind fools! The preacher

should embody, not mute, these tones.

2.Nevertheless, just as the meanings of texts are enlarged and

completed and given a new twist by larger biblical themes, and by the

gospel of grace, so also the tones of texts are enlarged and completed

and given a new twist by these realities. A totally dark jigsaw puzzle

piece may, in the big picture, be a part of the pupil of a bright and

shining eye.

3.The grace of God in the gospel turns everything into hope for those

who believe. Whatever was written in former days was written for our

instruction, that . . . we might have hope ( - Romans

15:4 - Romans 15:4}). He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up

for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all

things ( - Romans 8:32 - Romans 8:32}). Therefore, all the

various tones of texts (let them resound!) resolve into the infinitely

varied tones of hope, for those who believe in Jesus.

4.If there is a danger of not hearing the tone of gospel hope,

emerging from the thunder and lightning of Scripture, there is also a

danger of being so fixed on what we think hope sounds like that we

mute the emotional symphony of a thousand texts. Dont do it. Let the

tone grip you. Let it carry you. Embody the tone of the text and the

gospel dénouement.

5.But its not just the gospel of grace that should inform how we

embody the tone of texts. We are all prone to insert our own

personalities at this point and assume that our hopeful tone is the

hopeful tone. We think our tender is the tender. Our warmth is the

warmth.

This is why I said our capturing of the tone of the text should be

informed by the tonal balance of Jesus and the apostles. We may simply

be wrong about the way we think tenderness and hope and warmth and

courage and firmness sound. We do well to marinate our tone‑producing

hearts in the overall tonal balance of Jesus and the apostles.

6.Tonal variation is determined in part by the nature and needs of the

audience. We may well shout at the drowning man that there is a life

preserver behind him. But we would not shout at a man on the edge of a

precipice, lest we startle him into losing his balance. Jesus tone

was different toward the proud Pharisee and the broken sinner.

7.But audiences are usually mixed, with one person susceptible to one

tone and one susceptible to another. This is one reason why being in

the pulpit week in and week out for years is a good thing. The

biblical symphony of tones can be played more fully over time. The

tone one week may hurt. The next it may help.

8.There is a call on preachers to think of cultural impact and not

just personal impact. In some ways our culture may be losing the

ability to feel some biblical tones that are crucial in feeling the

greatness of God and the glory of the gospel. The gospel brings

together transcendent, terrible, horrific, ghastly, tender, sweet,

quiet, intimate, personal realities that for many may seem utterly

inimical. Our calling is to seek ways of saying and embodying these

clashing tones in a way that they sound like the compelling music.

9.In the end, when a preacher expresses a fitting tone, it is the work

of God; and when a listener receives his tone as proper and

compelling, it is another work of God.

10. So we pray. O Lord, come and shape our hearts and minds with the

truth and the tone of every text. Let every text have its true tone in

preaching. Shape the tone by the gospel climax. Shape it by the tonal

balance of Jesus and the apostles. But dont let it be muted. Let the

symphony of your fullness be felt.

John Piper

Desiring GodJohn Piper is the Pastor for Preaching at Bethlehem

Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He grew up in Greenville,

South Carolina, and studied at Wheaton College, where he first sensed

God's call to enter the ministry. He went on to earn degrees from

Fuller Theological Seminary and the University of Munich. For six

years he taught Biblical Studies at Bethel College in St. Paul,

Minnesota, and in 1980 accepted the call to serve as pastor at

Bethlehem. John is the author of more than 30 books, and more than 25

years of his preaching and teaching is available free at

desiringGod.org. John and his wife, Noel, have four sons, one

daughter, and an increasing number of grandchildren.

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What to Preach to Yourself Every Day - Tullian Tchividjian

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What to Preach to Yourself Every Day

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TheGospelCoalition

"The hard work of Christian growth, therefore, is to think less of me

and my performance and more of Jesus and his performance for me."

Email this articlePrint FriendlyBecause we are so naturally prone to

look at ourselves and our performance more than we do to Christ and

his performance, we need constant reminders of the gospel.

If were supposed to preach the gospel to ourselves every daywhats

the actual content of that message? What is it exactly that I need to

keep reminding myself of?

If God has saved youif hes given you the faith to believe, and you

re now a Christian; if youve transferred trust from your own

accomplishments and abilities to Christsaccomplishment on behalf of

sinnersthen heres the good news. In the phraseology of

- Colossians 1 - Colossians 1}, its simply this: Youve

already been qualified, youve already been delivered, youve already

been transferred, youve already been redeemed, youvealready been

forgiven.

Its been widely accepted that in the original language of Greek,

Ephesians 1:314 is one long sentence. Paul becomes so overwhelmed by

the sheer greatness and immensity and size and sweetness of Gods

amazing grace that he doesnt even take a breath. He writes in a state

of controlled ecstasy. And at the heart of his elation is the idea of

union with Christ. We have been blessed, he writes, in Christ with

every spiritual blessing (1:3): weve been chosen (v. 4), graced (v.

6), redeemed (v. 7), reconciled (v. 10), destined (v. 11), and sealed

forever (v. 13). Everything we need and long for, Paul says, we

already possess if we are in Christ. He has already sweepingly secured

all that our hearts deeply crave.

We no longer need to rely, therefore, on the position, the prosperity,

the promotions, the preeminence, the power, the praise, the passing

pleasures, or the popularity that weve so desperately pursued for so

long.

Day by day, what we must do can only be practically experienced as we

come to a deeper understanding of what we are positionallya deeper

understanding of whats already ours in Christ.

I used to think that growing as a Christian meant I had to somehow go

out and obtain the qualities and attitudes I was lacking. To really

mature, I needed to find a way to get more joy, more patience, more

faithfulness, and so on.

Then I came to the shattering realization that this isnt what the

Bible teaches, and it isnt the gospel. What the Bible teaches is that

we mature as we come to a greater realization of what we already have

in Christ. The gospel, in fact, transforms us precisely because its

not itself a message about our internal transformation, but Christs

external substitution. We desperately need an Advocate, Mediator, and

Friend. But what we need most is a Substitute. Someone who has done

for us and secured for us what we could never do and secure for

ourselves.

The hard work of Christian growth, therefore, is to think less of me

and my performance and more of Jesus and his performance for me.

Ironically, when we focus mostly on our need to get better we actually

get worse. We become neurotic and self‑absorbed. Preoccupation with my

effort over Gods effort for me makes me increasingly self‑centered

and morbidly introspective.

You could state it this way: Sanctification is the daily hard work of

going back to the reality of our justificationreceiving Christs

words, It is finished into new and deeper parts of our being every

day, into our rebellious regions of unbelief. Its going back to the

certainty of our objectively secured pardon in Christ and hitting the

refresh button a thousand times a day. Or, as Martin Luther so aptly

put it in his Lectures on Romans, To progress is always to begin

again. Real spiritual progress, in other words, requires a daily

going backward.

In her book Because He Loves Me, Elyse Fitzpatrick writes about how

important remembrance is in Christian growth:

One reason we dont grow in ordinary, grateful obedience as we should

is that weve got amnesia; weve forgotten that we are cleansed from

our sins. In other words, ongoing failure in sanctification (the slow

process of change into Christlikeness) is the direct result of failing

to remember Gods love for us in the gospel. If we lack the comfort

and assurance that his love and cleansing are meant to supply, our

failures will handcuff us to yesterdays sins, and we wont have faith

or courage to fight against them, or the love for God thats meant to

empower this war. If we fail to remember our justification,

redemption, and reconciliation, well struggle in our sanctification.

Christian growth, in other words, does not happen first by behaving

better, but believing betterbelieving in bigger, deeper, brighter

ways what Christ has already secured for sinners.

Preach that to yourself every day, and youll increasingly experience

the scandalous freedom that Jesus paid so dearly to secure for you.

Tullian Tchividjian

TheGospelCoalitionTullian Tchividjian is the Senior Pastor of Coral

Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. A Florida

native, he is a visiting professor of theology at Reformed Theological

Seminary and a grandson of Billy and Ruth Graham.

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Keep the Momentum in Your Preaching - Peter Mead

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Keep the Momentum in Your Preaching

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net Cor Deo

Does your sermon keep building momentum as you progress or does it

stall out in the middle or end? Peter Mead offers encouragement for

preachers to avoid the common pitfalls to message momentum. Email this

articlePrint FriendlyWhen you are preaching, your listeners are

looking for unity (a single focus to your preaching), order (a clarity

of structured presentation), and progress (a sense that you are moving

forward and getting closer to the end). It is this progress that can

be easily lost causing the message to feel like it gets stuck in the

mud.

What causes momentum to be lost? Could be one of several things:

Is momentum about content of the message? Yes, it can be. Is one

part of the message too dense or extended in terms of explanation? Is

there too much repetition that might give the sense that you are

losing your way or going round in circles? Content issues can cause a

loss of momentum.

Is momentum about structure of the message? Yes, it can be. If you

havent previewed the structure, or dont give effective and

deliberate transitions, then it can all meld into one and feel dense

or still instead of progressing. If you structure your message so

that you keep jumping around the text, listeners can lose the sense of

progress that comes from a sequential following of the passage. (It

can be appropriate to use this approach in a text, but make structure

and transitions extra clear.)

Is momentum about delivery of the message? Yes, it can be. If you

lose energy, or become monotonous in voice or visual presentation,

then momentum can seep away. If you lose your initial enthusiasm (or

if your enthusiasm is at a constant high pitch without releasing that

tension), then momentum can be lost.

Momentum can be hard to get hold of, but for preaching to engage

listeners, we have to consider not only unity and order, but also

progress. Dont take this the wrong way, but they like to know youre

getting closer to being done!

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.netCor Deo

Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

church in the UK. He serves as director of Cor Deoan innovative

mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

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10 Preaching Questions with Ray Ortlund Jr. - Colin Adams

- 8/2011.101

10 Preaching Qs

10 Preaching Questions with Ray Ortlund Jr.

Colin Adams

Unashamedworkman.wordpress.com

"Early in my ministry, I needed twenty‑plus hours to prepare. By now,

the disciplines are more streamlined. I average perhaps ten hours or

so," says Ortlund.Email this articlePrint FriendlyColin Adams asks Ray

Ortlund, author and pastor of Immanuel Church in Nashville, about his

thoughts on preaching and how he prepares his sermons.

1. Where do you place the importance of preaching in the grand scheme

of church life?

Preaching is central in the life of a church, because Jesus himself

speaks savingly through the preached Word. The Second Helvetic

Confession of 1566 was bold enough to say, When this Word of God is

now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe

that the very Word of God is preached and received by the faithful.

- Romans 10:14 - Romans 10:14} (ESV margin: . . . believe him

whom they have never heard) validates that conviction.

Another verse that means a lot to me is - 1 Corinthians

14:8 - 1 Corinthians 14:8}, If the bugle gives an indistinct sound,

who will get ready for battle? I have never seen a church rise in

spiritual power where the preaching was unclear, indistinct, overly

cautious, timid. Every church I know of that is making a gospel impact

has an unmistakably clear and winsomely courageous preaching ministry.

2. In a paragraph, how did you discover your gifts in preaching?

How does one discover gifts in any area? It just appears, as

experience allows and in the fullness of Gods time. My own preaching

started with complete ineptitude, graduated over time to struggle, and

by now has advanced to varying degrees of effectiveness and

ineffectiveness. My progress seems directly related to growing

theological discovery of Gods glory in the gospel, through

dissatisfaction with myself as a preacher, through the joy of seeing

God use me, and through the assurance that at any time God can rend

the heavens and come down in revival power.

3. How long (on average) does it take you to prepare a sermon?

Early in my ministry, I needed twenty‑plus hours to prepare. By now,

the disciplines are more streamlined. I average perhaps ten hours or

so.

4. Is it important to you that a sermon contain one major theme or

idea? If so, how do you crystallize it?

I often fall in love with every detail in my text, so that I tend

toward excess at that level in my preaching. But I try to ask, What

is the precise pastoral burden of this unique passage? Every detail,

however fascinating, is there in the text to help construct that one

overall message. So, after I have written my sermon draft, I go back

and interrogate every sentence, Do you really need to be here? If

not, it disappears.

5. What is the most important aspect of a preachers style and what

should he avoid?

The most important aspect, in my view, is believability the

believability of the message and of the preacher himself. The first is

a matter of clarity (exposition), defense (apologetics) and force

(power in application). I want so to persuade the people that they are

left thinking, Well, of course. How could it be otherwise? I receive

this as truth, I love this as beauty, I want this to change me. I try

to avoid everything about myself that may distract from that outcome.

6. What notes, if any, do you use?

I use a full manuscript. But I try to be in sufficient control of the

flow of thought and certain key phrases that it doesnt get in my way.

I want to enjoy the sermon and the people in the moment.

7. What are the greatest perils that preacher must avoid?

The greatest peril is forgetting what preaching is there for in the

first place. It is not there as a platform for pet theories,

inner‑church politics, the culture wars, developing a personal

following for myself or for proving how cool I can be. The preaching

ministry is there for the display of Jesus Christ, according to the

gospel. It is for him alone, as he wants to speak to the people, love

them, help them, save them. Preaching is a sacred experience and must

not be profaned by misplaced enthusiasms.

8. How do you fight to balance preparation for preaching with other

important responsibilities (eg. pastoral care, leadership

responsibilities)

I wish I had a good answer here. It is a constant struggle. The only

chance I have for success is setting aside protected blocks of time

when I am quiet and alone with God and my books. That usually means I

get away from my office. There is a difference between an office and a

study. Right now all I have is an office. So I have to get out of here

to do serious study.

9. What books on preaching, or exemplars of it, have you found most

influential in your own preaching?

My favorite is Lloyd‑Jones Preaching and Preachers, especially the

final chapter, Demonstration of the Spirit and of the Power. I am

stirred even now just to think about it. Oh, that I might preach just

one apostolic, anointed sermon before I die!

10. What steps do you take to nurture or encourage developing or

future preachers?

I want to do more in this way. I did teach at Trinity Evangelical

Divinity School for nine years. And now, indirectly, my participation

in The Gospel Coalition serves to lift up the next generation of

preachers. I also desire to be encouraging to other preachers in the

Acts 29 Network. And I hope that in five or six years my successor at

Immanuel Church will be here, established in ministry, so that he can

grow in authority as I fade away.

Colin Adams

Unashamedworkman.wordpress.comColin Adams is the pastor of Ballymoney

Baptist Church, Northern Ireland. For six years Colin had the

privilege of serving as an Associate Pastor with Charlotte Baptist

Chapel in Edinburgh. Before coming to Edinburgh he studied theology

for four years at International Christian College in Glasgow.

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25 Preaching Books ‑ Last 25 Years

- 8/2011.101

25 Preaching Books ‑ Last 25 Years

The 25 Most Influential Preaching Books of the Last 25 Years

Michael Duduit

Preaching magazine

Preaching magazine editor Michael Duduit offers a helpful list of the

top preaching books over the last quarter‑century. Email this

articlePrint FriendlyDuring the 25 years of Preaching magazine's

publication history, books have played a major role in the

publication. No wonderbooks are the lifeblood of the preacher's work.

Because books play such a vital role in the life of the preacher, this

publication has offered a key resource to help preachers know which

volumes promise to help us be more effective in the task of

proclaiming the Word.

Each year, Preaching offers an extensive survey of the best books for

preachers published in the past year; since the beginning, that survey

has been written by R. Albert Mohler, President of The Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Until moving to

the seminary presidency in 1993, Mohler served as associate editor of

Preaching, and wrote all the book reviews, as well as conducting a

number of interviews. Upon assuming the presidency, Mohler stepped

back from writing "The Preacher's Bookshelf," which appears in most

issues, but still writes the annual survey, as well as compiling his

annual list: "The 10 Books Every Preacher Should Read This Year."

Since 1993, editor Michael Duduit has written the "Bookshelf" column,

as well as the annual survey of the best homiletical books of the year

(including the Preaching Book of the Year), which accompanies Mohler's

survey. One of the distinctive elements of Preaching's focus on books

has been to identify the best publications in the area of homiletics.

Such books make up the bulk of book reviews in each issue and

typically are the source of those titles recognized as Book of the

Year, with just a few exceptions. During the past 25 years, what have

been the most influential books on preachingthose volumes that have

made the greatest impact on American preaching?In recent weeks we've

surveyed readers, preaching professors and influencers to compile what

we believe to be those books which more than any others have shaped

the thinking and teaching about preaching in the past quarter century.

1. Biblical Preaching by Haddon Robinson (Baker Books)

This book stands apart from all the others in terms of recognition by

those who study preachingby far it received the most nominations from

pastors and professors. The book was originally published in 1980, 30

years ago, but has dominated the classrooms of evangelical colleges

and seminaries in the past 25 years. A revised second edition was

published in 2001, guaranteeing that succeeding generations of young

preachers would benefit from this outstanding introduction to the task

of preparing and presenting biblical sermons. Robinson's emphasis on

"Big Idea" preaching has shaped the thinking of thousands of

expository preachers and been the major influence on many of those who

teach preaching in today's classrooms. More than any other book of the

past quarter century, Biblical Preaching has profoundly influenced a

generation of evangelical preachers.

2. Homiletic: Moves and Structures by David Buttrick (Fortress Press)

The second Book of the Year recognized by Preaching also was one of

the minority of such titles not written by an evangelical author.

Nevertheless, Buttrick's book, published in 1986, has influenced the

thinking of mainline and evangelical preachers and teachers with its

insights about the sermon as a series of "moves" rather than simply

propositional points. A densely written tome, it caused a generation

of teachers and students of preaching to think beyond the traditional

categories which normally were found in homiletical literature.

3. Between Two Worlds by John R.W. Stott (Eerdmans)

First published in 1982, Stott popularized the dominant metaphor used

to describe the work of the preacher in today's world, the messenger

of God with one foot planted in the biblical world and the other in

the contemporary setting. Few books in the past quarter century have

more profoundly influenced how preachers think of their own task.

4. Preaching by Fred Craddock (Abingdon)

The very first Preaching Book of the Year, Craddock's book (like the

author himself) has influenced a generation of young preachers to

discover the power of inductive approaches and the use of story in

preaching. Apart from Robinson's book, this probably has been the most

widely used preaching text in seminary classrooms in the past 25

years.

5. The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text by Sidney Greidanus

(Eerdmans)

Greidanus' text helped influence countless preachers and teachers in

understanding and emphasizing the critical nature of biblical genre in

shaping the sermon. The book was Preaching's Book of the Year in 1990.

6. Christ‑Centered Preaching by Bryan Chapell (Baker)

7. The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form by Eugene L.

Lowry (Westminster John Knox)

8. The Supremacy of God in Preaching by John Piper (Baker)

9. The Witness of Preaching by Thomas G. Long (Westminster John Knox)

10. Rediscovering Expository Preaching by John MacArthur & The

Master's Seminary faculty (Word)

11. Handbook of Contemporary Preaching, edited by Michael Duduit

(Broadman)

12. Preaching & Preachers by D. Martyn Lloyd‑Jones (Zondervan)

13. Communicating for a Change by Andy Stanley (Multnomah)

14. The Preaching Life by Barbara Brown Taylor (Cowley Publications)

15. Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture by Graeme

Goldsworthy (Eerdmans)

16. The Burdensome Joy of Preaching by James Earl Massey (Abingdon)

17. The Company of the Preachers by David L. Larsen (Kregel)

18. 360‑Degree Preaching by Michael Quicke (Baker)

19. Preaching and Teaching with Imagination by Warren W. Wiersbe

(Victor)

20. Scripture Sculpture by Ramesh Richard (Baker Academic)

21. The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching, edited by Haddon Robinson

and Craig Brian Larson (Zondervan)

22. Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition by Calvin Miller

(Baker)

23. The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative by Steven Matthewson

(Baker Academic)

24. Doctrine that Dances by Robert Smith (B&H)

25. Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching, edited by William H. Willimon

and Richard Lischer (Westminster/John Knox Press)

Michael Duduit

Preaching magazineDr. Michael Duduit is executive and founding editor

of Preaching magazine and the founding dean of the Graduate School of

Ministry at Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina. He holds

an M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from

Florida State University.

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What Preachers Won't Preach About - Toni Ridgaway

- 8/2011.101

What Preachers Won't Preach About

Study: What Preachers Won't Preach About

Toni Ridgaway

ChurchLeaders.com

Fifty‑five percent of pastors can identify one or more topics on which

they would not preach at all or only sparingly.

As reported in an article in Your Church magazine, 55 percent of

pastors can identify one or more topics on which they would not preach

at all or only sparingly, because the sermon could negatively affect

their hearers' willingness to attend church in the future.

Among them are:

Politics ‑ 38 percent

Homosexuality ‑ 23 percent

Abortion ‑ 18 percent

Same‑sex marriage ‑ 17 percent

War ‑ 17 percent

Women's role in church and home ‑ 13 percent

The doctrine of election ‑ 13 percent

Hell ‑ 7 percent

Money ‑ 3 percent

Editor's note: What's your reaction to this report? Should pastors

avoid hot‑button issues like politics in preaching? Are there specific

topics you avoid in the pulpit? Share your comments with the

SermonCentral community below.

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The New Normal of Preaching - Wayne Cordeiro

- 8/2011.101

The New Normal of Preaching

Wayne Cordeiro

MentoringLeaders.com

It's no longer what I want to teach; it's how they best learn.

Although I plan my messages out in advance, there is more that leaders

must consider when teaching. We all know that it is important to know

what you are teaching, but it is becoming even more important to know

how they are learning! Each generation has their own modality by which

they best absorb new information.

I have three children. One of them likes phone calls. The other likes

e‑mail, and the youngest demands that I text her. I called her one

day, thinking how nice a dad I was for thinking of her. She answered

in exasperated tones: Dad, DONT call me! What if I were in a movie?

Text me, Dad. Text me!

We need to start at a new starting point. It is no longer what I

want to teach. It is how they best learn! Here are a few tips:

1. Use more word pictures.

Young people have grown up with computers, television, computer games,

and other illustrated ways in which they interact. Word pictures help

your listeners mentally track with you.

2. Let them interact with you.

Interaction is important to the new learners. Your listeners want to

talk back to the communicator. Laughter is one way. Another is

reading aloud. One thing I do is to let them finish a sentence for me.

God is not against us! He is really (The answer, if you cant

figure it out, is for us!)

3. Use personal illustrations to underscore a truth.

Listeners want to know if you have experienced what you are talking

about. They want to know if you have felt the pain or the struggle.

They want transparency and authenticity. New teachers teach not only

out of their knowledge but also out of their scars.

4. Simplify without becoming remedial.

One person said that communicators take complicated subjects and make

them simple. Teachers, on the other hand, take simple subjects and

make them complicated. The world needs communicators who will help

them understand the simplicity of Gods love and ways.

5. Take the time to explain things theologically.

People will no longer settle for pat answers. Loyalty to a

denomination or to a body of pre‑approved knowledge no longer exists.

They are curious and want to know why. Why is homosexuality something

that is unacceptable in the Bible? Why is living together frowned

upon? What is wrong with drinking alcohol? How can Christian leaders

be so hypocritical and not think anything about it?

Alvin Toffler said: Those who are the literate of the future will not

be those who can read and write. It will be those who can learn,

un‑learn, and re‑learn.

There are many habits we must un‑learn, and then re‑learn new ways of

delivering the timeless message of Jesus Christ. Its not about

technology. Its about gearing our delivery to the ways they learn

best. I remember an adage from my old Youth for Christ days: Anchored

to the Rock; geared to the times.

It still rings true today.

Wayne Cordeiro

MentoringLeaders.comWayne Cordeiro is the founding pastor of New Hope

Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, Hawaii with over 14,500 in weekend

attendance. New Hope is also listed as one of the top ten most

innovative churches in America with Outreach magazine, listing them as

one of the top five churches to learn from. New Hope is known for

redeeming the arts and technology. Over 3000 attend services each

week via the Internet, and New Hope has seen over 73,000 first‑time

decisions in Hawaii since its inception 26 years ago.

He has authored ten books, including such classics as Doing Church as

a Team, Dream Releasers, Seven Rules of Success, Attitudes That

Attract Success, Divine Mentor, Leading on Empty and The Encore

Church. Wayne is also the author of the Life Journal, which is being

used by thousands of churches worldwide, is bringing people back to

the Word of God.

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Preaching When Times Are Tight - David Stokes

- 8/2011.101

Preaching When Times Are Tight

David Stokes

Preaching.com

The fact is, when current reality begins to let us down, when times

turn tough, even tight, this is a moment for us to shift the focus

away from this to that, from now to then, from here to there. Email

this articlePrint FriendlyDuring the waning days of The Great War

(1914‑1918), David Lloyd George remarked, when the chariot of

humanity gets stuck, nothing will lift it out of the mud better than

great preaching that goes to the heart. As a young boy in Wales, he

had grown up in a family that included several preachers; so the ways

of the pulpit certainly informed and influenced the only Welshman to

ever serve as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He was a man known

for his eloquent oratory and inherited from his father the idea of

preaching as thoughts that breathe and words that burn.Much has been

written over the years about how preaching can aid, inform, inspire

and comfort the multitudes when times are tough. When war clouds loom

on the horizon, or when hurricane Katrina‑like natural disasters

strike a community or nation, the person in the pulpit generally gets

the chance to speak to larger, and more attentive, crowds.

Being entrusted with sacred truth, having a burning desire to speak

about matters of great spiritual value and persuading people to focus

on such transcendent themes becomes a particular challenge when people

are hurting financially. But before we quietly complain that people

tend to overlook great moral issues when faced with economic

challenges, maybe we had better step back and consider how tight times

can become a critical moment for the preacher.It is simply a fact that

Americans will generally see economic issues as more important that

just about everything else. In 1992, when then‑Governor Bill Clinton

was running for the presidency, the campaign war‑room in Little Rock,

Ark., had a mantra on the wall: Its the economy, stupid. This was

designed to be a reminder that they needed to keep pocketbook issues

on the front burner during their run for the White House. And it

worked. It usually does. The leader who promises a rosier economic

future, or who is perceived to have a better plan to fix things,

always wins over someone who minimizes money matters to talk about

other issues. Consider Prohibition in the 1920s. For decades, a great

moral crusade led to the unprecedented step of amending the

Constitution to reflect a particular position on a behavioral issue

after it was trumpeted from pulpits across the land. I am not arguing

here the merits or demerits of Prohibition as public policy or the

issue of abstinence from alcohol (or not) as a standard. I am simply

using it as an example of how a moral/values issue promoted by

preachers (and a cast of others) can ultimately unravel because of a

tanking economy. Prohibition was the law of the land while the 20s

roared. Prosperity didnt have to be around the corner because it was

in most living rooms. But when the crash came in 1929, and as the

nation and the world descended into the abyss of depression and

deprivation, it wasnt long before the noble experiment ceased to

arouse much interest. The failed economy beat Prohibition becauselike

it or notin America money stuff trumps just about everything.

So what is a preacher to do? Well, in a sense, if you cant beat them,

join them. This is not an argument for watering down value‑driven

preaching, but rather it is simply a reminder that even preachers can

t ignore an elephant in the roomespecially if the big beast is

plastered with dollar signs.

What Happens When All the Wells Seem to Be Running Dry?

Certainly, when times are tight, and when people are looking for

answers, preachers must first avoid a powerful pitfall. We must be

careful to avoid the arrogance and excess of demagoguery. We must not

play the blame game and look for scapegoats. Our message is not about

a particular theory of economics from Adam Smith, to Karl Marx, to

Milton Friedman; rather it is about truth that transcends systems and

systemic failure.

Do you know the name of the most popular preacher during the dark days

of the Great Depression? He was a man listened to by millions every

week. He became for a brief time so powerful that even the president

of the United States feared him. He was so popular on the radio that

it was said that if you walked down the street on a summer day, you

could hear his complete broadcast through every opened window without

missing barely a word.

His name was Charles Edward Coughlin; and he was a Catholic priest,

overseeing a local parish in Royal Oak, Michigan. He was a

hard‑working and fiercely ambitious clergyman, who guided the growth

of his church, the Shrine of the Little Flower, during the late 1920s,

while experimenting with the then‑new medium of radio.

By the 1930s, and as the Great Depression was strangling the life out

of the nation itself, he had transformed himself into the voice of the

disaffected. During a decade when cultural circumstances were ripe for

exploitation by charismatic leaders who offered simplistic answers,

Father Coughlin became an incendiary force in the nation. And he did

so by becoming a notorious, though highly effective, demagoguesomeone

who exploited the fears that Franklin Roosevelt himself had been

trying to calm since uttering the phrase the only thing we have to

fear is fear itself.

The priest was a poisonous preacher. Father Coughlin used his pulpit,

both in his church and via the radio, to foster a spirit of anger,

hatred and divisiveness. He was very effective, but it was clearly a

monumental abuse of preaching itself. The messenger became the

message. That is a grave sin in light of what Paul said about not

preaching ourselves.

So powerful did the pugnacious priest become that Roosevelt spent a

great deal of time trying to neutralize him as a political force.

Fearing that Coughlin was going to join causes with Huey Long, the

would‑be‑American‑dictator from Louisiana, Roosevelt had another

Catholic supporter, Joseph P. Kennedy, arrange for the priest to meet

with the president at his Hyde Park, N.Y., home in September of 1935.

And in an interesting twist of fate, their meeting took place in the

hours just after Senator Long had been shot in Baton Rouge. FDR and

the priest were together when news came through about the Kingfishs

death.

But that didnt slow the radio priest down. He soon picked up Longs

fallen mantle and formed a coalition of the discontented to challenge

FDR in 1936. It all eventually fizzled into a footnote, but his story

demonstrates the potential power a preacher can wield during difficult

times if a clergyman is inclined to exploit a crisis to feather his or

her own nest.

When times are tight, great care must be taken not to feed the fears

of people. Rather, preachers should be agents of hope.

Though Coughlins story is probably the best‑known preacher story of

the Great Depression, it is by no means the only story, nor is it at

all representative of much of what happened across America. Evidence

abounds highlighting great spiritual movements in communities. New

churches were established; others saw growth that had not been seen in

years. Giving trends in churches were actually up in the 1930s over

the previous decade.

And preachers rediscovered some vital themes that are very relevant to

us today. They have always been part of our homiletic arsenal, but

when times are tight, they should be revisited with abounding joy.

Good News for Tight Times

Tight times cry out for good news. And as the proverb says, such news

from a distant but precious place is like cold water to a thirsty

soul. I am talking about a renewed emphasis on Heaven and things to

come. This doesnt necessarily mean detailed discussions about the

views and theories of eschatology (though this may very well be

appropriate in many cases), but rather a clear and bold declamation

about the ultimate outcome of the life of faith.

Jesus understood this very well. When circumstances began to distract

the attention of His faithful followers, especially as they began to

perceive that something bad was on the horizon, He admonished them,

Let not your heart be troubled.

But our Lord didnt merely offer a kind and generic there, there

with a perfunctory pat on their backs. No, He proceeded to tell them

about a placea compelling and very real placethat He was going to

prepare for them.

The fact is, when current reality begins to let us downwhen times

turn tough, even tightthis is a moment for us to shift the focus away

from this to that, from now to then, from here to there. Our ancient

spiritual ancestors, the patriarchs, understood this. They didnt get

to experience the abundant earthly blessings that had been promised,

so they looked afar off and for a city whose builder and maker is

God.

If emotional maturity is, according to M. Scott Peck, demonstrated

largely by a capacity for deferred gratification, then spiritual

maturity must involve a measure of expectant hope orbetterdeferred

glorification.

Whatever the immediate future holds for Americans, it is clear that we

have experienced an unprecedented and unsurpassed period where our

standard of living has gotten better and better. This, in fact, may

now be changing. No one knows for sure. But times of prosperity and

plenty tend to have a dulling effect on spiritual senses and values.

In a sense, for much of our nation the idea of a better place and

future glory has failed to capture the imagination, even the

attention, of so many in recent years because, well, it has been

pretty good down here. But as the years of plenty possibly give way to

leaner times, preachers should take the cue and dig out the old

classics about Heaven and its glory.

As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s and 1970s in this country, a

generationthe Baby Boomersquestioned authority and challenged

assumptions. They saw their parents, who had endured the Great

Depression and a global war, as obsolete. Many dismissed traditional

values and theological concepts like Heaven. It was commonplace to

hear talk of a celestial home mocked as the myth of pie in the sky by

and by. This was a generation who had never really suffered or seen

suffering.

It is a sobering truth that we tend to only learn to appreciate Heaven

and its glory when we are faced with suffering or some present

distress. We can then identify with Paul in - Romans

8 - Romans 8} when he spoke about the unworthiness of comparisons

between future glory and present difficulty.

So as the nation slides into a possible period of suffering, preachers

should be voices crying in the wilderness about a better place. Some

may object that to be too heavenly minded is to be little earthly

good, but authentic believers understand what those in generations

past graspedwhen we set our hopes on things above, we can manage

things here below so much better.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews talks, in - chapter

12 - Hebrews 12}, about a contrast between things that can be shaken

(read: this world, human life, created things) and a kingdom that

cannot be shaken. In a sense, this is exactly the fault‑line our

nation finds itself on at this critical moment in our history.

Politicians and social leaders will promote and apply their remedies

for the nations illssome things will work; others will not. But the

preacher must never become distracted by any of it. When the

foundations are shaken, we must speak boldly about the security and

serenity of Heaven and all that it means.

When times are tight, when abundance gives way to want and prosperity

is left behind, preachers of righteousness have something to say.

There is a place, a better place, a glorious place, a place prepared

by God Himself.

Or, put another way: I am putting a sign on the wall in my study this

year, and it says: Its about Heaven, stupid!

David Stokes

Preaching.com David is the pastor of Fair Oaks Church in Fairfax,

Virginia, a writer, commentator, and broadcaster. His recent book, The

Shooting Salvationist, was published in 2011.

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The Post‑Sermon Bible Test - Peter Mead

- 8/2011.101

The Post‑Sermon Bible Test

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net

We preach hoping and praying for the message to mark and transform

lives as it is preached. But what about after the sermon is over?

Email this articlePrint FriendlyWe preach hoping and praying for the

message to mark and transform lives as it is preached. But what about

after? I want to preach in such a way that the following things are

true:

1. The listener will continue to be transformed by the text in the

coming days. If the text were merely a source for data and sermonic

stuff, then chances are the listeners will lose track of where the

message came from. For the text to linger in their hearts and minds,

the preacher needs to shine light on the text and shine the message of

the text on the screen of their hearts. If they have only heard about

it, there is less chance they will remember it than if they have

seen the text painted vividly during the sermon.

2. The listener will be able to go back to the text later and

understand it. If the listener were to look up the text later, then I

want them to be able to understand it. That means that they have had

it clearly and effectively explained. Not only what does it mean, but

why does it mean that? Knowing that I take it a certain way is

nowhere near as good as them seeing that that is what it is saying.

3. The listener will want to go back to the text later to read it.

This is a biggie. If we assume that listeners go home and re‑read the

preaching text and carefully work through the notes they took, then we

are naive to say the least. The preacher has to stir motivation for

them to want to go back to the text. That motivation will come from

an effective message, including instilling a confidence in them that

they can see the why behind the what of the text. Why does it mean

what the sermon said it means? They also have to be convinced of the

relevance of the text to their lives. Irrelevant or inaccessible

texts are least likely to be return destinations in the days after a

sermon.

4. The listener will know how to make sense of it when they go there.

This is like number 2, but slightly more than that. - Number

2 - Numbers 2} was about them being able to understand the text

itself. This one is about them being equipped to handle the text.

That comes down to the instruction given in the sermon (and many

sermons over time).

Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.netCor Deo

Peter Mead is involved in church leadership at an independent Bible

church in the UK. He serves as director of Cor Deoan innovative

mentored ministry training programand has a wider ministry preaching

and training preachers. He also blogs often at BiblicalPreaching.net.

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Preaching on the Run: 7 Tips for Bi‑Vocational Pastors by Todd

Hiestand ‑ ToddHiestand.com

"My sermon prep is no longer about how many hours I 'spend studying.'

With this approach, I genuinely believe that every hour of the week is

sermon prep."

I was told in seminary that I should spend one hour of sermon prep for

every minute I will be preaching. For many of us, that means we

should spend 20‑30 hours preparing sermons. This approach poses some

serious problems for me. First of all, I have other pastoral

responsibilities. Second, I am bi‑vocational so I barely even have

that much time to give to everything I do. For those two reasons

alone, there is just no chance I am spending 30 hours a week prepping

for a sermon on Sunday.

The challenge isnt finding more hours to prepare sermons; the

challenge is finding some kind of rhythm that allows me to spend less

time studying in the classic sense while still engaging the text in a

way that allows me to lead my community well in the study of the

Biblical text.

My sermon prep is no longer about how many hours I spend studying.

With this approach, I genuinely believe that every hour of the week is

sermon prep. My pastoral care, my Web design work, my parenting, my

friendship, my going to the store, my arguments, my anger, my

frustrations, my celebrations: these are all sermon prep.

Here is my week:

Monday: Ingest the Text (30 minutes)

On Monday, we sit with the text and let it seep into our lives. If it

s short enough, try to memorize it. If its longer, get familiar with

the contours of it, the themes, tone, etc. Our goal here is to allow

the text to live with us all week as we work, play, do pastoral care,

etc. Throughout the week, I try to answer the following questions:

How does this text preach the gospel to the people I interact with

everyday?

How does this text encourage the people I interact with everyday?

How does this text equip us for witness in the world?

How does this text critique my basic assumptions about how the world

works?

How does this text call me, critique me, challenge me, encourage me?

The main question I am asking all week: what is the one thing that God

wants to say to our community through this text?

Tuesday: Sit w/the Text, Find Context (1 hour)

Tuesdays, I continue to sit with the text. Pray through it. I tend

to read the text a few times throughout the day and continue to become

familiar with it and let it seep into my heart, soul, and mind. I

also begin looking at the context surrounding the text and seek to

understand whats going on around it.

Wednesday: Ask Questions, Make Observations, Context (1 hour)

This is when I ask questions about the text and make general

observations about things that stick out. I ask the general who,

what, where, when, why, how questions. I look up words I dont know

and even do a word study or two on words that seem to have

significance elsewhere in Scripture. I do the same thing with the

context. Here I look deeper into the context to get a good sense of

how it fits into the story of the book as well as the overarching

narrative of Scripture.

Thursday: Research and Study (2‑3 hours)

I do not do theology, biblical interpretation in a vacuum. I greatly

value the diversity of the witness of church history. Today is the

day where I seek the wisdom of fellow Christians and especially church

history. I spend a few hours with books, commentaries, etc. trying to

see how Christians over the centuries have interpreted the text. I

also have a few people commentaries. Meaning: people who are like

live, walking commentaries to whom I go for their impressions,

thoughts, and interpretations on this text.

Friday: Write/Outline (1‑3 hours)

Today is the day when I sit down and start writing. This often looks

different depending on the week Ive had and the text itself.

Sometimes, I just start writing, and the outline develops as I write.

Other times, I write an outline first and then write. I used to

manuscript my sermons, but I have done less and less of that. But

generally, what I try to do on Friday is take my week of living the

text and get it out on a page to try to get my thoughts together

somehow.

Saturday Night: Finalize Things (1 hour)

The better I do during the week in sitting with the text, studying it,

and living with it, the less I have to do on Saturday nights after the

kids and my wife go to bed. In fact, in a perfect world, Ill have

nothing to do on Saturday nights other than look over things quickly

and head to bed. But generally on Saturday nights, Im just making

sure it all makes senseat least in my own head.

Sunday Morning: Pray Through the Outline/Notes

Sunday mornings I get to the building early, or go to Starbucks so Im

not distracted, and pray through my notes and make any changes that

come up. Then, I preach. Tim Keel gave me great advice one time (I

dont remember if it was in a book or in a conversation with him): He

said to preach from your gut. I love this advice because you just

cant do this unless youve spent the entire week digesting, chewing,

and living the text you are preaching from. Also, I cant do this

unless I have preached it to myself and let the text transform and

shape me before I seek to proclaim it to my community.

That's my personal approach to finding a way to faithfully prepare to

preach while holding down a few jobs, raising four kids, and taking

care of the rest of what it means to lead and be part of a church

community. Of course, this isnt how it is going to work for

everyone, but I hope that it helps some of you figure out what works

best for you.

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7 Ways to Preach a Lousy Sermon by Ken Collins ‑ KenCollins.com

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7 Ways to Preach a Lousy Sermon by Ken Collins ‑ KenCollins.com

Here are a few tips for making your sermons truly lousy, eminently

forgettable, and completely ineffective. Of course, you could choose

to do the opposite.

Here are a few tips for making your sermons truly lousy, eminently

forgettable, and completely ineffective.

1. Quote too many scriptures or scholars

Everyone already knows that you are an expert; thats why they are

listening attentively. There is no need for you to prove yourself. A

whirlwind tour through scriptures and scholars, quoting them seemingly

at random and for diverse or trivial purposes is necessarily

superficial, since time prevents you from examining them properly.

Scriptural gymnastics confuse younger Christians since they are not

equipped to follow, and it feeds the pride of older Christians, which

causes them to sin. The purpose of the sermon is to edify the

congregation in their faith, not to convince them that you swallowed a

chain reference Bible or a seminary rolodex.

Scriptures and scholars are different. If you quote a lot of

scriptures that are thematically related and you use them to

corroborate your argumentation, you can use as many as you like. In

fact, it is a big plus. If you quote too many scholars, however, it

will backfire on you, no matter how adroitly you use them. People will

think you dont have any personal convictions or that you are

insecure, because they instinctively know that whoever invokes

authority generally has none of their own.

This mistake is most often made by new ministers who are fresh from

the seminary. It takes them a while to adjust to the fact that they

are preaching to a congregation, not to a professor. You are preaching

to edify the congregations faith, not to enhance your reputation.

2. Use illustrations that only part of your congregation can

understand

The purpose of the sermon is to include all listeners into the gospel.

Most sermons are delivered to mixed audiences. In his letters, Paul

balanced every Jewish illustration with a Greek equivalent. He knew

that an illustration that only a portion of the congregation (however

large) can appreciate would exclude, lose, or alienate the rest.

For example, suppose the preacher is a new father and he innocently

tries to draw a lesson from his toddlers antics. Teenagers cannot

relate; they tune out the whole sermon. Older parents chuckle at Papa

s inexperience, missing his point. Oldsters wax wistful, and their

minds wander non‑constructively. The infertile wish they had stayed

home. Only a select few get the point.

If you have an illustration that only appeals to one part of your

congregation, try to think of parallel illustrations that cover the

other parts of your congregation, then use them together.

3. Use irrelevant illustrations

Sometimes, preachers get nervous in the pulpit because they have

forgotten their material, lost their chain of thought, their audience,

or their confidence, or they feel the Spirit has temporarily forsaken

them. So they tell an irrelevant joke whose real purpose is to ask the

congregation for approval. This happens to all preachers at one time

or another. If it happens to you, dont panic, but you should pray

about it afterwards. The problem may have been poor sermon planning,

or perhaps you were forgivably distracted by some unexpected event. It

may also be the Holy Spirit demonstrating His powerful, essential, and

inspiring presence in your ministry by withholding it temporarily. Do

not fail the test and lose heart!

4. Go for the laughs

Humor is good, necessary, and appropriate for sermons. After all, many

incidents in scripture are funny, such as the story of the woman at

the well, who rather dimwittedly saw Jesus living water as a way to

get out of work, hilariously missing his point! You should not

hesitate to use topical humor.

However, resist the temptation to become a stand‑up comic. The purpose

of pulpit humor is to relieve the dramatic tension, to hold the

congregations attention, or to drive a point home. The purpose of

irrelevant jokes is to seek approval from the congregation. You are to

seek the approval of God. If you find yourself on a roll, and it isnt

announcement time, watch out! It has a quick reward, but from the

wrong party.

5. Deliver an academic lecture

A sermon is an exposition of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a general

audience. It is Good News, because that is what Jesus commissioned. It

should draw people inexorably to His love and forgiveness through a

recounting of His life and deeds and inestimable love. Sermons appeal

to the heart and soul and draw all, so that anyone can be saved

through it.

Lectures appeal to the intellect and thus (but not improperly) exclude

some people. Not everyone in the congregation is equipped to follow a

seminary‑level sermon. Classroom‑style lectures are a valid format

that you should neither neglect nor confuse with sermons. There is a

time and a place for all things.

Preaching and teaching are two separate gifts: Teaching helps people

believe what they can understand, while preaching helps people trust

what is beyond their understanding.

6. Ramble aimlessly

Your sermon, whether it is prewritten or extemporaneous, should be

well organized. Dont make your sermons into longhorn steersa point

here and a point there, and you know whats in the middle. To the

congregation, a five‑minute ramble is subjectively twice as long as a

fifteen‑minute, well‑organized sermon.

7. Preach too long

Im not going to tell you how long a sermon should be in minutes. Some

sermons are too long before they even start. Others are so engrossing

and so inspired, you regret when they end. Sometimes, a sermon has to

be short, because the service that day is long and involved. You dont

need to put your watch on the pulpit to see if your sermon is too

longjust watch the congregation. How many people are looking at their

watches? How many are staring out the window? How many are passing

notes? How many are fidgeting and restless? If youve lost your

audience, you might as well cut your losses, close up shop, and try

again next week. You wont recover by talking more.

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10 Mistakes To Avoid 0 Finish Your Sermon Strong: 10 Mistakes To Avoid by Peter Mead

- 3/2012.101

Ending ‑ 10 Mistakes To Avoid

Finish Your Sermon Strong: 10 Mistakes To Avoid by Peter Mead

BiblicalPreaching.net

Finishing a sermon is neither easy nor natural. Peter Mead offers some

observances of poor sermon endings and some hints on how to finish

strong.

Finishing a sermon is neither easy nor natural. There are plenty of

ways to crash a good sermon; Id like to offer a few Ive observed in

myself and others.

1. The Searching for a Runway Conclusion This is a common one that

we fall into when we fail to plan our conclusion before starting to

preach. As the sermon wears on, we become aware of the need to land

the plane but have to search for a decent runway on which to land it.

Consequently, as were coming in to land, we remember that we havent

reinforced a certain element of the message, so we pull out of the

descent and circle around for another attempt. Next time in, we think

of half of a conclusion that might work better and so pull out again,

circle around, and turn in to another possible landing strip. Needless

to say, passengers dont find this pursuit of a better runway to be

particularly comfortable or helpful. When the message drags on a

couple of minutes (or ten) longer than it feels like it should, any

good done in the sermon tends to be undone rather quickly!

2. The Just Stop Conclusion There are some preachers who dont

seem to be aware of the possibility of a strong finish and so dont

bother to land the plane. It simply drops out of the sky at a certain

point. Once all has been said, without any particular effort to

conclude the message, it's suddenly over. This is a particular danger

for those who go on to announce a closing hymn, I find.

3. The Overly Climactic Conclusion At the other extreme are those

who know the potential of a good finale and so overly ramp up the

climactic crescendo in the closing stages. After preaching a ho‑hum

message, they suddenly try to close it off with a fireworks display

that will leave everyone stunned and standing open‑mouthed with barely

an ooo‑aaah on their lips. Truth is that if the message hasnt laid

the foundation for such an ending, then people will be left stunned

and unsure of what to say: Uuuugh?

4. The Uncomfortable Fade Conclusion Perhaps the domain of new,

inexperienced, and untrained preachers, this follows the general

comfort rule of preaching: If you are not comfortable in your

preaching, your listeners wont be either. So the message comes to

what might be a decent ending, then the speaker, well, sort of, just

adds something like, Thats all I wanted to say, I think, yeah, so

(like this paragraph, 20 words too long!)

5. The Discouraging Finale Conclusion Another tendency among some

is to preach what might be a generally encouraging message but then

undo that encouragement with a final discouraging comment. People need

to be left encouraged to respond to the Word and to apply the Word,

but some have a peculiar knack for finishing with a motivational

fizzle comment.

6. The Machine Gun Finish Wildly fire off a hundred different

applications in the final minute in the hope of hitting somethingno

depth, very shallow, badly aimed, rarely hits the target, and often

has nothing to do with the passage.

7. The Salvation by Works Finish After preaching the wonders of

Gods grace in Jesus Christ, undermine that grace by throwing doubt on

their own salvation because of their sin or not doing the application

you suggest.

8. The Left Field Finish Where the conclusion and/or application

has very little to do with the passage, your sermon, or anything else.

9. The Not Again Finish Where (for some funny reason) the

conclusion is the same as every other conclusion youve given for the

last three years. It also happens to be your hobby horse and is often

one of pray more, give more, evangelize more, read the Bible more,

and come to church more.

10. The Gospel out of Nowhere Finish Where the preacher feels the

absence of the gospel in the message and so levers it in at the

conclusion without any sense of connection to what has gone before.

(To a thinking listener, this may feel a little forced and

intellectually inconsistent.)

And while I'm at it, here's a bonus:

11. The Tearjerker Finish Where the speaker seeks to cement

emotional response by throwing in a random and largely disconnected

tearjerker of a story (perhaps involving a child, an animal, a death,

or whatever). Strapped to this emotional bomb, the preacher hopes the

truth of the message will strike home (even though in reality, the

truth will probably be smothered in the disconnected emotion of the

anecdote).

Landing the Plane

Since Ive now offered examples of how to finish weakly as your sermon

finishes weekly, lets now ponder what makes a conclusion strong:

As someone who has flown once or twice, let me continue with the

airplane analogy since there are several thoughts that can be shared

here. Passengers who have had a great journey with a bad landing will

leave with their focus entirely on the bad landing. Passengers want

the pilot to know where he is going and to take them straight there.

They dont particularly want the pilot to finish a normal journey with

a historic televised adrenaline landing. Passengers like a smooth

landing, but theyll generally take a slight bump over repeated

attempts to find the perfect one. Once landed, extended taxi‑ing is

not appreciated. A good landing that takes you by surprise always

seems to have a pleasant effect.

The conclusion is a great opportunity to encourage response to and

application of the message. Sometimes it is helpful to review the

message flow, the main idea, and intended applications. But remember,

the conclusion has to include, at some point, the phenomenon known as

stopping. Review, encourage, stop.

Standard teaching it may be, but worth mentioning nonetheless:

Generally it is not helpful to introduce new information during the

conclusion. A concluding story? Maybe thats OK. But dont suddenly

throw in a new piece of exegetical insight into the preaching passage

or rush off to another passage for one last bit of sight‑seeing.

Haddons RunwayOne approach that I particularly appreciate and find

hard to emulate is Haddon Robinsons oft‑used approach. It is evident

after most Haddon sermons that he carefully planned his final

sentence. He flies the plane until he gets there, and then quite

naturally the plane lands on that landing strip of just ten to fifteen

words and the journey is oversmooth, apparently effortless, immensely

effective. As he teaches in class, its much better to finish two

sentences before listeners think you should than two sentences after!

Post‑Landing

Now a few thoughts relating to the post‑landing phase of the journey.

Sometimes it is helpful to have a closing song, sometimes it is

helpful to have a whole set of responsive songs, and sometimes it is

better not to allow the singing of a song to help people switch back

into their real world and leave the sermon behind. Sometimes its

helpful to leave space for silent response; sometimes that is just

plain uncomfortable and overkill. Sometimes quiet music played after

can help the contemplative mood; sometimes music blasting out after

the meeting can switch people into a frenzied chaos of raised voice

fellowship (and the journey is forgotten, I fear!).

After the sermon is over, but still within the confines of the

service, sometimes it is helpful to have another person wrap things

upthen again, sometimes it can be disastrous. (I cant help but think

of the helpful MC who undoes the impact of a global missions thrust

with the typical and deeply annoying and we can all be missionaries

right where we are! . . . thankfully no one added that to the end of

Matthews gospel or wed never have read the New Testament!)

Whether the analogy continues to work or not is somewhat unimportant,

but these thoughts are worth pondering in our churches:

Some passengers want to get out of the plane and airport at breakneck

speed. Like it or not, some people just want or need to flee from the

church once things are over. It doesnt help them to make that

difficult. At the same time, no airline Ive been on will let you

leave without a friendly goodbye. Some churches put a lot of energy

into greeting/welcoming teams (a very good idea) but let people slip

away without human interaction after the service. On the other hand,

some churches seem to put barriers to people leaving, or create an

environment where people are rushed out before they need to be (the

preacher at the door shaking hands with everyone can sometimes create

an urgency to vacate the building).

Some passengers need to sit down and let it all sink in. This may be a

slight stretch, but some airports (Im thinking more of the U.S. ones)

have seats at the gate so passengers can sit down if they need to. In

churches sometimes, there is nowhere for someone to sit and soak for a

while. I mentioned the music signal in some places that blasts out an

indication that its all over now and its time to interact (at high

volume if you want to be heard). This creates an environment very

non‑conducive to post‑service reflection.

Some passengers need to access further information. I suppose its a

bit like finding out about connecting flights, but how do people in

church know who to go to in order to find out more? Is the preacher

accessible, or is he stuck at the door shaking hand after hand and

smiling at polite feedback? Is there a way to get someone to pray

with? What about finding out about other aspects of church life that

could be the next step after this service?

Most passengers will want to talk with someone about their journey. In

the travel world, it seems like everyone is ready to say something

about what theyve just experienced (or endured) when they meet a

human who actually knows them. In the church world, it often seems

like everyone is ready to talk about anything but what theyve just

experienced. But actually, people need to reflect and reinforce and

respond in community rather than in isolation. Does your church

encourage that kind of interaction?

Today weve pondered the art of sermon‑stopping. We have thought about

weak finishes, and then about the elements in finishing strong. Weve

also considered the elements included in the service after the sermon

is over. It certainly is not easy to get the plane down comfortably

and effectively. I pray I have offered some constructive alternatives.

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Preaching - On Giving - Secrets to Sermons on Giving by Bob Russell

- 3/2012.101

Secrets to Sermons on Giving by Bob Russell

Bob Russell Ministries

Bob Russell encourages pastors and preachers who tiptoe around the

topic of giving.

For years I boasted to our congregation that I only preached on

stewardship once annually. When that dreaded sermon came, I apologized

at the beginning: If youre visiting with us today, please understand

that we only preach on giving once a year. In essence I said, Im

sorry youve chosen to come todayI know this subject is a downer.

Please come back anyway, and I promise youll not hear another sermon

on money for fifty‑one weeks!

Its easy to understand why we tiptoe around the subject of

stewardship. Money is still a god to many church members, and many

visitors are skeptical of the churchs motives. Certain spiritual con

men have fleeced their congregations and given preachers a bad name,

and we dont want to be identified with them.

Even though preaching on money turns some people off, some are turned

off when we preach on adultery or forgiveness, too. But we dont

apologize: If youre having an affair, please understand we seldom

talk about sexual purity. Come back next week and youll be more

comfortable. We dont print a disclaimer in the bulletin: The

preacher will be talking about releasing resentment today. Please

understand this sermon is for our members only. If youre visiting

today, you arent expected to forgive. If youre currently harboring a

grudge, earplugs are provided.

About a decade ago, I changed my philosophy from apologizing for

teaching on a touchy subject to making it an essential part of my

preaching calendar. Now nearly every January, I preach a series of

three or four sermons on stewardship.

The results have surprised meattendance has been good, the number of

people coming to Christ has actually increased during the stewardship

month, and offerings have improved as much as 15 percent annually! My

transition taught me several lessons about preaching on stewardship

without alienating the audience.

The $6,000 Sermon

Many immature believers and visitors are alienated when we preach on

stewardship because many preachers speak almost entirely about the

need to give to the church. Our sermons are erroneously viewed as

self‑servinga necessary evil to generate church incomebut not

spiritual or helpful.

But when the preacher encourages families to get out of debt, to

refrain from extravagant luxuries, to avoid wasting money on credit

card interest rates, to be generous with their children, or to learn

contentment with less, the congregation regards the message as

helpful. Its not viewed as a fundraiser but as a relevant, biblical,

and much‑needed challenge. A discussion of giving against the backdrop

of total stewardship of resources is much more effective than

preaching on giving alone.

Once, in a sermon on hoarding, I pointed out the foolishness of

waiting until we die to give our children their inheritance. I

explained, When we die, our children will most likely be in their

fifties or sixties. They likely wont need our money then! And so,

until our deaths, we hoard it from our grandchildren.

The time to help our children is when theyre young and need the

money. Our children will actually benefit from it, and we can hear

them thank us instead of wondering if they quietly hope we croak

early! And since we can transfer as much as $10,000 per child annually

without the recipients paying taxes on the gift, its wise to transfer

resources while were living.

Several weeks after the sermon, I received a thank‑you letter from a

young couple whose parents happened to be visiting that weekend. The

wife explained that, after hearing the sermon, her parents sent her

and her brother checks for $6,000. Nothing even close to that had ever

happened before! The young woman wrote, My brother and I call that

the $6,000 sermon! Please preach more sermons on

stewardshipespecially when my parents are in town!

The Best Time to Teach

The timing of a stewardship sermon dramatically affects how it is

received. If people are reconsidering their spending priorities, they

re more likely to welcome biblical teaching on money. But if theyre

overwhelmed with charities, events, and school expenses, for example,

theyll likely resent a church asking for more money, too.

For forty years, our churchs fiscal year ran from July 1 to June 30.

We voted on the proposed budget and made pledges the third Sunday in

May. That was when I preached the dreaded sermon on stewardship.

But few people were interested in reviewing their financial

commitments in May. We competed with the Kentucky Derby (which is huge

in Louisville), Mothers Day, and Memorial Day weekend. Other things

demanded our peoples time, thoughts, and commitment.

January proved a much better month for us to consider stewardship.

During January, people make New Years resolutions, theyre chastened

by Christmas bills to be wiser money managers, and they feel little

pressure from other church and community activities.

And even though we moved our fiscal calendar to begin in January, we

stopped asking for pledges toward the budget. We dont want people to

regard the sermons as fundraisers. We want them to consider their

attitude toward possessions as a personal and spiritual matter, vital

to their relationship with God. For us, the beginning of the year is

the best time for that.

People Want to Give

When I stopped asking for pledges, it signaled a change in how I

preach on money. Most people arent motivated to give their best so

that they can meet a church budget. Instead of saying, We need every

member to step up their giving so we can meet our budget, I now say,

When you give, your money will be used to take the gospel to

unreached people in Third World countries; it will buy food and

clothing for the poor in our inner city; it will enable our children

to learn about Jesus at Christian camp. I remind people repeatedly

that they are giving to the ministry of Christ, not just to meet a

budget.

The examples I use are more often about the poor who have sacrificed,

not the rich who have given huge amounts. Even the wealthy are moved

more by genuine sacrifice than by big gifts from the well‑to‑do.

Jackie Nelson gave a moving testimony years ago that Ive often

repeated. Jackie said, I am a single mother of three teenagers. My

ex‑husband does not help. I barely get by. We really want to do our

part in this three‑year campaign so our new building can be built. But

when we discussed it as a family, we realized that we cant give any

more than a tithe. So we decided that our gift would be to pray every

day for the success of this program.

But in the middle of our discussion, my oldest son said, Mom, weve

got cable television. We dont have to have that. So weve decided to

give up our cable TV for three years so we can do our part.

The congregation realized, If she can make that kind of sacrifice to

give a little, we who are so blessed can do even more. Like the five

loaves and two fish that Jesus used to feed a multitude, God took

Jackies small gift and multiplied it many times over.

I also seek examples that teach through conviction rather than guilt

and obligation. For example, Ive preached:

When my first son was born, we were blessed to have an excellent

babysitter who lived next door. Patty not only babysat, she washed

dishes, folded clothes, and looked for ways to help around the house.

She was dependable, and my son loved her.

When she first started babysitting, I asked Patty how much she

charged, and she said, Fifty cents an hour. (Obviously this was a

long time ago!) I gladly paid that amount.

A few years later, our second son arrived, and I said, Patty, your

responsibilities have increased significantly now. What do you charge

for taking care of two children?

By this time, we had a good relationship, and she said, Oh, Mr.

Russell, just give me what you want to give.

Do you think I gave more or less than fifty cents an hour?

In the Old Testament, God commanded his people to tithe10 percent of

their crops and flocks were returned to God. In our era, he has given

us Jesus Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the fellowship of the

church, the privilege of living in the most affluent nation in the

world, plus so many personal blessings. Yet when we ask how much we

should give, he just says, Give as you have been prospered. You

decide whether that should be more or less than a tithe.

Most people want to be generous. So I dont hesitate to use that as a

motivation for wise stewardship. When I say, When you are a wise

steward, it honors God, relieves tension, gives you self‑confidence,

eliminates guilt, enhances your witness, and enables you to give more

generously, people are not offended. They understand Im not talking

about fundraising but about a better stewardship of life.

When They Still Complain

No matter how hard you try to make the subject of stewardship helpful

and palatable, some people will still object. Many just love money too

much, and when you touch a nerve, you elicit strong emotions. But I

often remember an old proverb, If you throw a rock into a pack of

dogs, the one that yelps is usually the one who got hit.

Criticisms need to be evaluated as objectively as possible, but they

should not discourage us from preaching the truth. On the contrary,

criticism often illustrates the need for preaching on stewardship more

often.

Jesus talked a lot about money, but not everyone responded favorably.

When the rich ruler asked, What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Jesus didnt try to develop a long‑term relationship with him before

discussing the subject of generosity. He said up front, Go, sell

everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure

in heaven ( - Mark 10:21 - Mark 10:21}). That wasnt very

seeker‑friendly, and the rich young ruler turned and walked away

because he had great possessions. But the problem was with the young

mans greed, not Jesus message.

Jesus made it clear theres a close tie between peoples pocketbooks

and their hearts. He didnt say, If a persons heart is right, they

will give. He said, When you invest your money in something, your

heart will follow. When we motivate people to give, were helping

them to put their heart in the right place.

Despite the occasional criticism, some of the most gratifying

experiences Ive had in ministry have occurred during times of

stewardship emphasis. Jerry Nichter, for example, who now serves as

chairman of our elders, points to a sacrificial commitment he and his

wife made as the turning point in his walk with Christ. That was the

single most deepening spiritual experience of my life, he admits.

Many others echo his testimony.

After making a sacrificial commitment to a major capital campaign,

Bill Beauchamp, another elder, wiped tears from his eyes and said, I

just gave away money I dont have, for people Ive never met, for a

God I love very much.

Get Ready: Im Preaching on Money

Here are five ways to prepare your people for a stewardship sermon:

Dont apologize. A preacher who subscribed to our tape ministry was

disgruntled that I had preached four straight sermons on sacrificial

giving. If you dont stop preaching about money, there wont be any

people left to fill up the new building youre trying to finance, he

wrote.

My wife replied to him, Dear sir, during the month Bob preached on

giving, enthusiasm was high, and twice as many accepted Christ as do

in a regular month. Over half of Jesus parables concern use of

material possessions. Maybe if you preached more often about money,

your church would do better. In Jesus love, Judy Russell.

We are ambassadors of Christ, not negotiators. Have confidence that

preaching about money is Gods will and that it will strengthen people

s relationship with Christ.

Gain the support of the church leadership prior to the series. An

endorsement from church leadership gives you confidence, support, and

credibility with the congregation. It also includes and silences some

of your most potentially hurtful criticsthe leaders themselves.

Include stewardship examples in non‑stewardship sermons. A line or two

in a sermon unrelated to stewardship reminds the congregation that

faithful living always involves giving.

Last Easter, in a sermon on heaven, I talked about our rewards there:

The young Christian woman who remains pure will receive a greater

reward than the young woman who yields to temptation. The husband who

cares for his sickly wife receives a greater reward than the husband

who takes his healthy wife for granted. And the couple who tithes

every paycheck from the beginning of marriage will have more treasure

in heaven than the couple who gives God the leftovers.

No one could say the Easter sermon was about giving. But stewardship

is such a vital part of life that it should be naturally included on a

regular basis.

Emphasize that church funds are administered with integrity. We want

to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For

we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the

Lord but also in the eyes of men (2 Cor. 8:2021). During every

stewardship series, I explain how donations are administered.

The offering is deposited in a safe. The next morning, it is counted

and recorded by a volunteer committee. Then it is taken to the bank by

the treasurer, who is accompanied by a policeman. Two people must sign

all checks, and the preacher is not one of them. The minister has to

go through the same red tape of budget requests, purchase orders, and

receipts as others do. Our church is a member of the Evangelical

Council on Financial Accountability, and there is an annual,

independent audit of our books. The church staff is reminded to spend

church funds more frugally than if they were their own.

People are motivated to give when they are confident they are giving

directly to legitimate needs.

Title sermons to communicate theyre about more than giving. Message

titles that reflect an emphasis on helping people understand money,

instead of giving more of it, takes the dread out of money messages. A

sermon series on Money Matters could include: How Can You Make the

Most of What You Have? When is Enough Enough?

Taken from The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching by CRAIG BRIAN

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Bob Russell

Bob Russell Ministries

Bob Russell retired as Senior Minister of Southeast Christian Church

in June 2006. During his tenure, the church grew from a few hundred

members to a megachurch with an average weekend attendance of over

18,000, becoming one of the largest in America. He now serves as

Chairman of the Board of Londen Institute, an organization that

enables men and women to pursue a second career in the ministry. Bob

also conducts monthly mentoring retreats for active ministers, seeking

to encourage them and pass on some of his lessons learned.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/bob‑ru

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Repreaching a Sermon - Daring to Preach the Same Message Twice by Joe McKeever

- 3/2012.101

Repreaching a Sermon

Daring to Preach the Same Message Twice by Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.com

Joe McKeever dares you to consider re‑preaching a topic‑‑or even a

sermon‑‑to your congregation.

As a young pastor, I couldn't repeat a sermon any more than I could

eat yesterday's breakfast again. Each sermon was a one‑time thing.

When it was over, it was gone forever.

But then, invitations began to come in to preach in churches pastored

by friends who thought I had something worth sharing with their

people. That's when I had to get serious about repeating a sermon.

After all, my friends' members hadn't heard my stories or sermons.

Anything I did would be new to them.

Those early attempts to preach repeats in my late 20s and early 30s

were fairly pathetic, I think. Since my sermon notes were always one

thing and the actual sermon something else entirely, nothing in

writing told me what I had preached the first time, so I couldn't

reproduce it verbatim. I had to go from memory, or better, get with

the Lord anew on that sermon.

These daysI'm now 70 and retiredalmost every sermon I preach is on a

topic I've preached before (with the occasional exception; hey, I'm

not living on reruns here!). As a result, I have more or less figured

this thing out, at least to my satisfaction. Maybe pastors will find

something of benefit here.

Don't expect it to be an exact copy of the first time.

The absolute worst thing you could do in repreaching a sermon would be

to take the earlier manuscript and deliver it verbatim. After all, a

lot has changed since you preached it:

The world has changed. Circumstances change, cultures evolve,

technology advances. Illustrations get outdated, and language changes.

You are at a different place in life. You've grown. You know more

about the Lord and His Word than you did even a year or two ago.

You are preaching to a different congregation. As any preacher will

tell you, the hearers of a message have a lot to do with how it is

preached, and your congregation has changed (physically and

spiritually) since you last preached the message.

I think of the pastor who preached in the afternoon to a different

congregation the same message he delivered to his own people that

morning. Asked why it had been so powerful in the morning and had

bombed four hours later, he said, "Poor preaching is God's judgment on

a prayerless congregation." Every congregation is different.

Therefore, sermons will not be the same everywhere or work in the same

way in every setting.

Go to the Lord to see what He wants updated.

The fact that the Holy Spirit led the preacher the first time does not

automatically mean He has said all He has to say on that subject or

has nothing to new to add. In fact, on the second time around, the

pastor is ready to receive more from the Spirit than he was when he

first produced the sermon. He now has a grasp of the basic text and a

good understanding of the thrust of the message. So, as he prays over

it and rethinks the material, he is able to do something pastors

rarely get a chance to do: improve on a sermon he has already

preached. This is one of the most exciting aspects of repreaching an

old sermon. You get to make it better. As a result, you become a

better preacher yourself.

Ask any schoolteacher. The first year a teacher covers a subject, he

or she labors every night trying to assemble the material for the next

day's class. It's an ordeal. The second year improves, since the

teacher has been through the jungle before. He has carved out a path

and knows he can get to the destination. Fortified by the experience

of the first year, she looks around to see if there is a better way to

teach this difficult event or explain that hard‑to‑grasp concept. The

second year is typically more fun, more effective, and more productive

than the first. At this point, the teacher faces a crucial decision:

He can reteach the first year's material again and again, or he can

keep learning on the subject and trying to perfect his methods.

Pastors sometimes have the experience of a church member hearing him

preach a repeat in another church and observing, "That was great,

pastor. You ought to preach that for us sometime." He thinks he did,

but he didn't. He preached an earlier incarnation of that sermon. A

slimmer version. The embryonic form.

Pastors who simply regurgitate previously delivered sermons without

restudying them, praying them through anew, and looking for better

ways and sharper insights, are failing their people. I expect we all

have known pastors who went from one short‑term pastorate to another

doing thisand they wonder why the people in the pews never grew. The

number one reason people in the pews are not growing is that the man

in the pulpit has long since ceased to grow.

Always be working to improve your best sermons.

A good preacher reads something and realizes it fits with the sermon

on grace. He finds a great illustration that works for the sermon on

stewardship. He stumbles across an insight from Scripture that is

ideal for the message on God's Word. How he incorporates these into

his files so it will be there waiting the next time he preaches that

sermon is up to him. If, like I tend to be, he is a totally

right‑brained preacher (that is, spontaneous in his impulsiveness,

disorderly in his scheduling, and haphazard in his filing system), he

will drop the note into a drawer or file it in the pages of his Bible

and may or may not find it when he needs it. The stories I could tell

about searches for those gems I had hoped to use the next time I

preached a certain sermon!

Experience the sermon anew with the congregation.

This little insight came straight from the lips of Professor James

Taylor, teacher of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary in the mid‑1960s. This is also how Christian entertainers

like Dennis Swanberg and Andy Andrews do it. They relive whatever

they're sharing along with their audiences. Look at their faces, and

you know in a heartbeat that even though they have their material down

pat and know exactly what comes next, they are experiencing it afresh

along with you. It's a neat trick (or, if you prefer, a masterful art)

that comes from loving people and devoting oneself to one's craft.

Revisit the material you couldn't use the first time.

You can't preach every insight you have found, can't use every good

story you have uncovered on a subject, and can't bring in every text

that pertains to the message. You will have to pick and choose. This

is great, because it means you can give your very best stuff to your

congregation. They get to hear the choicest offering you can give.

Young pastors have to learn the hard way not to toss in every insight,

every story, or every text that fits a sermon. Audiences do not have

an infinite capacity to take in and retain all the preacher throws at

them. He needs to respect their limitations and keep the sermon at a

reasonable length by laying aside all but the most important elements.

After all, the pastor's goal is not to convince his audience he knows

all there is to know of a subject; he's trying to convey the Lord's

message on that subject.

Don't hesitate to preach repeats to your own people.

Most pastors I know tell the congregation when they are preaching a

repeat. They might dress several up as "summer reruns" or "back by

popular demand." I know at least two pastors who, each year on the

anniversary of their arrival at that church, will deliver the same

message year after year. I have no idea how well they do it, and I

sometimes wonder why they do it.

However, if the sermon was preached more than a couple of years

earlier, calling attention to its being a rerun is completely

unnecessary. After all, as we've seen, the sermon will not be the same

as it was before (or, it shouldn't be!).

Invariably, some church member will seek out the preacher following

the sermon with her finger pointing to a verse in her open Bible.

"Pastor, you preached this same sermon three years ago." Count on it

happening. But don't let it bother you. The proper answer to that is:

"I preached the same text. But it's a different sermon. And by the

way, don't be surprised if I preach on this again. It's a great

Scripture, isn't it?"

Have fun preaching those repeats, pastor. At least this is one time

you do not have to reinvent the wheel or discover fire all over again.

What a privilege to be a co‑laborer with the Lord in preaching this

Word!

Joe McKeever

JoeMcKeever.com

Dr. Joe McKeever is a preacher, cartoonist and the retired Director of

Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans. Currently

he loves to serve as a speaker/pulpit fill for revivals, prayer

conferences, deacon trainings, leadership banquets and other church

events. Visit him and enjoy his insights on nearly 50 years of

ministry at JoeMcKeever.com.

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keever‑daring‑to‑preach‑the‑same‑message‑twice‑779.asp

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7 Ways Twitter Will Improve Your Preaching - Brandon Cox

Twitter

- 3/2012.101

Preaching and Twitter

7 Ways Twitter Will Improve Your Preaching

Brandon Cox

BrandonaCox.com

Brandon Cox shares how utilizing the power of Twitter can extend your

teaching platforms to an entirely new audience.

John Calvin published 22 volumes of commentaries on the Bible and

Martin Lloyd‑Jones published 9 volumes on Romans alone. What if you

could remove all of the non‑essential language, antiquated stories,

and strip all of that knowledge down to some bite‑sized, transportable

truths? There is certainly room for argument against such condensation

of historic works, but we have to realize that we live in a society

inundated with more information in a day than Calvin consumed in a

year.

In other words, the ability to be succinct and concise is worth gold

when communicating truth in todays culture. And Twitter helps. The

ability to write volumes of words is impressive, but possibly not as

impressive as the ability to take a deep and complex theological truth

or spiritual application and package it in 140 characters or less.

So Twitter might be looked down upon by plenty of the academic leaders

of our age, but men who spent long ours preaching, like John Piper and

Rick Warren have utilized the power of Twitter to extend their teach

platforms to an entirely new audience in the techno‑centric space of

Twitter.

Though Im sure this idea will stir plenty of debate, I want to argue

that Twitter can be a powerful tool for improving your preaching,

teaching, and public speaking. Why?

Twitter Forces Us to Concentrate Our Message

If you take all the water out of fresh‑squeezed orange juice, you wind

up with concentrate, a far more potent solution. Twitter causes us to

remove unnecessary words and reduce a message to its bare minimum.

Obviously this can create the problem of lacking context and

sub‑structure, but it also forces us to consider the reader. In fact,

if we dont consider the reader, we can get in serious trouble. So we

have to ask such question as

How will this be understood with no surrounding context?

How will this reflect on my own values and beliefs?

How could these words be mis‑applied by a simple misunderstanding?

Is this valuable enough to be shared in the first place?

Twitter Is a Powerful Collaboration Tool

Cant find the answer to a question? Ask it on Twitter and youll

often wind up with a variety of opinions and perspectives. You can use

Twitter to crowdsource the refining of ideas. Obviously you shouldnt

rely on the crowd to prepare messages for you, but by all means, allow

the crowd to help you brainstorm, refine, and pare down your message

to its essential core.

Twitter Allows for Immediate Feedback

How will this idea sound on Sunday? How will people react? Throw it

out to the Twittersphere and youll see whether it sticks or bounces

back to hurt you. The feedback can be painful, but helpful.

Twitter Is a Tremendous Real Time Research Tool

I doubt youll ever use Twitter for exegetical work, but if youre

attempting to gauge cultures understanding of a concept, measure a

trend, or find a relevant application, Twitter can prove to be a

powerful culture‑search mechanism.

Twitter Introduces Us to Better Communicators Than Ourselves

Twitter is not about how you had your eggs prepared this morning. Its

about content, and it provides a lifeline back to sources of learning

and inspiration. Ive discovered numerous great communicators and have

allowed them to passively mentor me all by hopping from one Twitter

relationship to another.

Twitter Expands Our Influence

That is to say, our audience grows as we forge new relationships

across social platforms. If you dont see the potential of Twitter for

connectivity, you havent hung around long enough to test it out. You

ll ultimately discover new listeners and readers as you build bridges

with people you never would have known otherwise.

Twitter Extends the Life of Your Message

We often feel, at the end of a message, that we spent many hours

preparing for a few moments of communication only to see the remains

of that message tossed onto the scrap heep or filed away for posterity

s sake alone. But with Twitter, you have a great platform to scatter

the soundbites from a message for a long time to come.

You can write Twitter off and you will probably survive. I would not

argue that its an essential tool for preaching, teaching, and

speaking. I would urge you, however, not to write off its potential as

a research, collaboration, publicity, and even skill‑honing tool.

Brandon Cox

BrandonaCox.com

Brandon Cox is Lead Pastor of Grace Hills Church, a new church plant

in northwest Arkansas. He also serves as Editor and Community

Facilitator for Pastors.com and Rick Warren's Pastor's Toolbox and was

formerly a Pastor at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. In

his spare time, he offers consultation to church leaders about

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\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/brando

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4 Popular Preaching Myths - Brian Orme

- 3/2012.101

4 Popular Preaching Myths

Brian Orme

BrianOrme.com

What you think about your preaching while preparing your message might

be just as important as the words you say when you deliver it.

Your preaching preparation might be influenced by many things:

criticism, praise, the current needs or trials of your people, the

depth of the textbut theres one thing that shouldn't influence us:

myths.

Were all prone to wrong thinking at one time or another. Wrong

thought patterns creep in from our insecurities, our environment, or

even our adversary. Thats why it is so important to continually renew

our minds on the truth of the Scripture.

These four myths, if believed, can change the direction of your

preaching and impact your effectiveness for the kingdom. Dont fall

for these dangerous beliefsstay alert, guard your mind. and preach in

the freedom and grace God has already given you.

1. More study time equals better sermon delivery.

This myth seems like a logical truth: spend more time studying

commentaries, reading sermons and notes from the greats, and churn out

a better, more compelling message in proportion to the time spent.

Theres only one problemits not true. More prep time can be a

factor, for sure, but its not a universal truth. In fact, the law of

diminishing returns often kicks in at some point in our prep, and more

study time can actually hurt your message. The best sermon prep is

still wrapped up in experiencing the presence of Godnot books and

more study time.

- Ecclesiastes 12:12 - Ecclesiastes 12:12}: But beyond this,

my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive

devotion to books is wearying to the body.

2. One bad sermon equals less attendance next week.

I think this is the fear of many preachersthat one monumental,

incredibly poor, disastrous sermon will lead to the churchs demise.

This is a false assumption based more on fear than on fact. People are

generally forgiving of a bad sermon. The likelihood of your attendance

dropping by 1025% because you preached a wonky sermon is minimal at

best. A well‑meaning preacher who loves Jesus and works hard to

prepare his sermon, but still bombs, is just not that big of a deal.

Drops in attendance happen over time typically due to many factors,

not just a bad sermon. Of course, if you preach something opposed to

the gospel or sound doctrinenow, that might equal a dropbut one

sermon that didnt connect to your audience is not a felony offense.

Its better to focus on what God thinks about your sermon, anyway.

I Corinthians 3:6‑7: I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God

has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one

who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

3. Open feedback will hurt your preaching.

Many preachers refuse to receive feedback or criticism because they

think it will hurt their preaching or because they feel like they

might be scratching itching ears. Open feedback can be tough, but

some of the best preachers have learned to listen, receive, filter,

and grow from it. If you dont have anyone who's willing to give you

honest feedback on your sermons, then your preaching is likely not as

good as it could be. Dont get me wrong, feedback and criticism are

not fun, but neither is growth until you see the fruits on the other

end. The secret to making feedback work is finding wise counsel (other

than your spouse) for regular, constructive input.

- Proverbs 15:22 - Proverbs 15:22}: Plans fail for lack of

counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

4. Deeper teaching equals an academic or heady theological message.

Theres a lot of buzz about deeper teaching in the church today.

The fact is, the definitions that church members and church leaders

use to explain deeper teaching are typically not the same. Church

leaders often equate deeper teaching with theological depth and

academic delivery, while many church members define deeper teaching in

terms of how the sermon impacts or convicts them personally. So, whos

right? On this one, its the audience. The depth of your sermon is not

dependent on your academic sources but on your ability to penetrate,

convict, and point out truth in clear and simple terms. We could

argue about the simplicity of the preaching of Jesus vs. the

complexities of Pauls epistles, but the bottom line is that deeper

teaching should move us to deeper obedience. Academic sermons arent

badtheyre just not always deep. Deep sermons require an uncanny

precision for building a clear biblical context while moving the

listener to a provocative response. Paul summed up his preaching into

two powerful points that change everything: Christ crucified.

I Corinthians 2:2: For I resolved to know nothing while I was with

you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

These are the top four preaching myths Ive discovered both in my own

sermon prep and in my conversations with other church leaders. Id

love to hear your feedbackwhat myths would you add to the list?

Brian Orme

BrianOrme.com

Brian Orme is the General Editor of SermonCentral.com and

ChurchLeaders.com. He works with creative and innovative pastors to

discover the best resources, trends and practices to equip the church

to lead better every day. He lives in Ohio with his wife, Jenna, and

four boys. You can read more from Brian at brianorme.com.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/brian‑

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How I Write a Sermon - Bruce Frank

- 3/2012.101

How I Write a Sermon

Bruce Frank

BruceFrank.org

It is not uncommon for pastors to be asked about their sermon

preparation habits. How long does it take? What sources do you

use? What day do you study? There are plenty of other ways used

by great preachers, but here is what mine basically looks like most

weeks:

Monday: No message preparation

Tuesday: After prayer, I start to exegete ("draw out of") the Biblical

text that I will be teaching that weekend. This means I study the

historical, grammatical, and contextual details of the text and the

individual words. I feel this is a non‑negotiable for the pastor.

The first rule of Bible teaching is to be faithful to what the

original writer meant to the original hearers of the text. Paul told

Timothy, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman

who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of

truth ( - 2 Timothy 2:15 - 2 Timothy 2:15}). I use some

software called Logos 4 for much of this. This is usually done for

about five hours in the afternoon. A rough outline and the flow of

the text usually begins to emerge.

Wednesday: On Wednesday morning, I look at/listen to all the resources

I can get my hands on concerning the subject. This includes other

pastors, commentaries, books, and Internet research on a particular

subject, etc. This is usually about four hours on Wednesday morning.

I will also begin to write down some specific applicationI want my

hearers to know how to apply the truths in Gods Word specifically.

Thursday: Thursday is the day when I actually write the message down.

I am not as tied into points as I was several years ago, but I still

need structure to it. This includes the necessary time on the

introduction, illustrations, and application points. I do not use a

manuscript but a fairly detailed outline. This also includes anything

that will show on the screens during the message. Writing this down

is usually a process of about six hours, most all day Thursday.

Friday: No preparation

Saturday: I will usually go into my study at home around 7:00 p.m. and

begin to go over the message. This includes editing it down a little,

going over the outline a few times, adding a few things, etc. While I

dont technically memorize the message, I do want it to feel that

way. When somebody is really tied to his notes, it can come across as

insincere. I will then pray through the message from about 10:00 p.m.

to 11:00 p.m. and then go to bedthere's a long day ahead!

Hope this helps, and God bless your ministry!

Share your process for sermon prep in the comment section below.

Bruce Frank

BruceFrank.org

Bruce Frank is the Lead Pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church, one of the

top 50 fastest growing churches in America. He lives in Asheville,

North Carolina, with his wife Lori and their two sons, Tyler and

Conner.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/bruce‑

frank‑how‑i‑write‑a‑sermon‑911.asp

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5 Reasons to Use MORE Video in Your Church Services - Barry Whitlow

- 3/2012.101

Preaching & Video

Top 5 Reasons to Use MORE Video in Your Church Services

Barry Whitlow

BarryWhitlow.com

1. Video is the #1 information delivery tool in the world today.

With over three billion videos viewed on YouTube every day and 80

million hours of videos being watched daily, the impact of video on

the mission of the church is immense. Video is no longer just about

entertaining; its a proven information delivery tool.

2. Video holds attention better.

Video is visually interactive; this helps hold the attention of the

viewer, resulting in greater retention and application of what is

being communicated.

3. Video helps your church stay relevant.

What will people in your audience be thinking about this coming

weekend? Would you like to illustrate a point using a football video

clip? Want to inspire people to invest their life in something that

will outlive them by using a clip about Steve Jobs? Video helps you

intersect with where your people already are emotionally, in order to

speak life‑changing truth into their lives.

4. Video content is plentiful and inexpensive.

Engaging your audience with a video that relates to your topic has

never been easier, and YouTube has proven time and time again that

video content does not have to be Hollywood quality to communicate

effectively and impact the human heart. Instead of thinking about

which verbal illustration you can use, think about which video

illustration would be appropriate.

5. Video shapes your demographic.

Like worship song choices, the regular use of video over time helps to

shape your audience and attract a younger demographic, especially

young families in the 30‑something and under demographic.

Barry Whitlow

BarryWhitlow.com

Barry Whitlow is a Church Growth Consultant and pastor specializing in

visitor attraction & retention; how to cast vision to keep giving

momentum high; church growth through guest services; and capital

campaign fundraising.

\webpage{http://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors‑preaching‑articles/barry‑

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9 Preaching Tips That Will Change Lives - Rick Warren

- 3/2012.101

Preaching For change

9 Preaching Tips That Will Change Lives

Rick Warren

Radicalis Conference

I'll say it over and over: The purpose of preaching is obedience. That

is why you should always preach for response, aiming for people to act

on what is said.

Ill say it over and over: The purpose of preaching is obedience.

Every preacher in the New Testamentincluding Jesusemphasized

conduct, behavioral change, and obedience. You only really believe the

parts of the Bible that you obey. People say, I believe in tithing.

But do they tithe? No? Then they dont believe in it.

That is why you should always preach for response, aiming for people

to act on what is said. John did this: The world and its desires pass

away but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

( - 1 John 2:17, NIV) - 1 John 2:17 NIV} And in - 1

John 2:3 (NIV) - 1 John 2:3 NIV}, We know that we have come to know

him if we obey his commands.

After about 30 years of preaching, here are nine things Ive learned

about preaching for life change:

1. All behavior is based on a belief.

If you get divorced, its because you believe that disobeying God will

cause you less pain than staying in your marriage. Its a lie, but you

believe it. When somebody comes to you and says, Im leaving my

husband, and Im going to marry this other man because I believe God

wants me to be happy. They just told you the belief behind their

behavior. Its wrong, but they believe it.

2. Behind every sin is a lie I believe.

At the moment you sin, youre doing what you think is the best thing

for you. You say, I know God says to do that, but Im going to do

this. What are you doing? You believe a lie. Behind every sin is a

lie. Start looking for the lies behind why people in your church act

the way they do. When you start dealing with those, youll start

seeing change.

- Titus 3:3 (NIV) - Titus 3:3 NIV} declares, At one time we

too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of

passions and pleasures. When you live in sin, youre living in

deception and believing a lie.

When you look at your congregation, you dont see the lies they

believe, but you do see their behavior. You know theyre unfaithful;

you know theyre uncommitted; you know all these things. The tough

part is figuring out the lie behind the behavior. The wiser you get in

ministry, the quicker youll start seeing the lies. Youll grow and

mature in ministry and become more discerning, because youll start

seeing patterns over and over.

3. Change always starts in the mind.

Youve got to start with the beliefthe liebehind the behavior.

- Romans 12:2 (NIV) - Romans 12:2 NIV} commands, Be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. The way you think

determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way

you act. If you want to change the way you act, you must determine the

way you think. You cant start with the action. Youve got to start

with the thought.

4. To help people change, we must change their beliefs first.

Jesus said, You will know the truth and it will set you free.

( - John 8:32 NIV) - John 8:32 NIV} Why? Because to help people

change, youve got to help them see the lie theyre basing their

behavior on. Thats why when you know the truth, it sets you free.

5. Trying to change peoples behavior without changing their belief is

a waste of time.

If you ask a person to change before his mind is renewed, it wont

work. Hes got to internalize Gods Word first.

For example: Your belief patterns are in your mind. Every time you

think about a belief, it creates an electrical impulse across your

brain. Every time you have that thought again, it creates a deeper

rut.

If you want to see change in your church, you must help people get out

of their ruts and change their autopilot. For instance: Lets say I go

out and buy a speedboat with an autopilot feature on it. I set the

speedboat to go north on autopilot, so the boat goes north

automatically. I dont even have my hands on the wheel. If I want to

turn the boat around, I could manually grab the steering wheel and by

sheer willpower and force, turn it around. I can force it to go south,

but the whole time Im under tension because Im going against the

natural inclination of the boat. Pretty soon I get tired and let go of

the steering wheel, and it automatically turns around and goes back to

the way its programmed.

This is true in life. When people have learned something over and

over, being taught by the worlds way of thinking, theyre programmed

to go that way. What if a man is programmed to pick up a cigarette

every time hes under tension? But one day he thinks, This is killing

me! Im going to get cancer. So he grabs the steering wheel and turns

it around forcibly, throws the pack away and says, I am going to

quit!

He makes it a week without a cigarette, a week and a half, two weeks

but the whole time hes under tension because he hasnt changed the

programming in his mind. Eventually, hes going to let go and pick up

a cigarette again.

If you want to change people radically and permanently, you have to do

it the New Testament way. You have to be transformed by the renewing

of your mind. Just telling people, You need to stop smoking You

need to stop doing this You need to stop doing that isnt going

to work. Youve got to help them change their belief pattern.

6. The biblical term for changing your mind is repentance.

What do most people think of when I say the word repent? They think

of a guy on the street corner with a sandwich sign saying, Turn or

burn. Youre going to die and fry while we go to the sky. They think

of some kook.

But the word repentance is a wonderful wordmetanoiawhich means in

Greek to change your mind. Repentance is just changing the way we

think about something by accepting the way God thinks about it. Thats

all repentance is. The new words for repentance are paradigm shift.

Pastors, we are in the paradigm‑shifting business. We are in the

repentance business. We are about changing peoples minds at the

deepest levelthe level of belief and values. But let me clarify this

with the next point.

7. You dont change peoples minds, the applied Word of God does.

- 1 Corinthians 2:13 - 1 Corinthians 2:13} (NLT) helps us keep

this in focus: We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the

Spirits words to explain spiritual truths. In real preaching, God is

at work in the speaker.

- 2 Samuel 23:2 (NIV) - 2 Samuel 23:2 NIV} says, The Spirit

of the Lord spoke through me. His word was on my tongue.

- Zechariah 4:6 (NIV) - Zechariah 4:6 NIV} says, Not by

might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord Almighty.

So keep in mind: You dont change peoples minds, the applied Word of

God does.

8. Changing the way I act is the fruit of repentance.

Technically, repentance is not behavioral change. Behavior change is

the result of repentance. Repentance does not mean forsaking your sin.

Repentance simply means to change your mind. John the Baptist said in

- Matthew 3:8 (NIV) - Matthew 3:8 NIV}, Produce fruit in

keeping with repentance. In other words, OK, youve changed your

mind about God, about life, about sin, about yourselfnow lets see

some fruit as a result of it.

9. The deepest kind of preaching is preaching for repentance.

Because life change happens only after you change somebodys thinking,

then preaching for repentance is preaching for life change. It is the

deepest kind of preaching you can preach.

Every week I try to communicate Gods Word in such a way that it

changes the way people think. The word repentance has taken on such

a negative image that I rarely use the word. But I preach it every

single week.

Repentance is the central message of the New Testament. What did the

New Testament preachers preach on?

John the Baptist: Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

( - Matt. 3:2 NIV) - Matthew 3:2 NIV

Jesus: Repent and believe in the Gospel.( - Mark 1:15

NIV) - Mark 1:15 NIV

What did Jesus tell his disciples to preach? So they went off and

preached repentance. ( - Mark 6:12 NAB) - Mark 6:12 NAB

What did Peter preach at Pentecost? Repent and be baptized every

one of you.( - Acts 2:38 NAB) - Acts 2:38 NAB

What did John preach in Revelation? Repent.

I believe that one of the great weaknesses of preaching today is that

there are a lot of folks who are afraid to stand on the Word of God

and humbly but forcefully challenge the will of people. It takes

courage to do that, because they may reject you. They may reject your

message; they may get mad at you and talk about you behind your back.

And because so many pastors have been unwilling to challenge people

and cause a change in belief resulting in behavior change, our nation

is falling apart. - Proverbs 29:18 (NCV) - Proverbs 29:18 NCV

warns, Where there is no word from God, people are uncontrolled.

P.T. Forsythe says, What the world is looking for is an authoritative

Gospel spoken through a humble personality. An authoritative Gospel

spoken not as a hammer, but with humility.

So now, I have a personal challenge for youlife application. Are you

going to use the Bible the way it was intended or not? Will you repent

of preaching in ways that were not focused on application that could

change peoples character and conduct?

Rick Warren

Radicalis Conference

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake

Forest, Calif., one of Americas largest and best‑known churches. In

addition, Rick is author of The New York Times best‑seller The Purpose

Driven Life and The Purpose Driven Church, which was named one of the

100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. Learn more from

Rick at the Radicalis Conference at Saddleback Church.

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7 Benefits of Hosting a High‑Profile Guest Speaker - Hal Seed

- 3/2012.101

Preaching ‑ Guest Speaker

7 Benefits of Hosting a High‑Profile Guest Speaker

Hal Seed

PastorMentor.com

Are high profile guest speakers worth the time and money? "Only if you

value lost people," says Hal Seed.

Last weekend, New Song hosted Scott Rigsby for what we call a Wow

Weekend. Scott is a paraplegic triathlete the only double amputee

to complete the Hawaiian Iron Man competition. Scott did some things

for us that we couldnt have done for ourselves. His unique story of

perseverance in the midst of pain gripped our members. And his coming

attracted 300 guests, many of whom wouldnt have otherwise darkened

the doors of a church.

Are high profile guests worth the time and money?

Only if you value lost people. (Or rejuvenating lapsed members. Or

motivating your people to become inviters.)

Craig Groeshel has taught us that to reach people no one else is

reaching, you have to do things no one else is doing. Scott helped us

do that, and more.

The Benefits of a High‑Profile Guest:

1. A high‑profile guest can create a heightened incentive for your

members to invite friends.

A week before Scotts visit, many New Songers passed out invitations

to their co‑workers. Crossing that work‑religion barrier can be

awkward. The heightened incentive of hearing an athletes tale can

help overcome the barrier. A lady who works at a gym invited her

entire staff. A cross country coach invited his whole team. A swimmer

emailed every swim coach in the area.

I invited my barber. Id invited her a dozen times before, but she

always said her schedule wouldnt allow it. Two weeks ago she

mentioned she was thinking about training for a triathlon. As soon as

my haircut was finished, I went out to my car and brought her an

invitation. She not only came, she brought her mother with her. They

both told me theyd be back next week!

During our Saturday night service, I sat next to a family of five who

had been invited by one of our vocalists. During our prayer time, the

mother went forward and wept openly in the arms of our prayer partner.

Afterwards she told me she was born and raised in Ireland, and had

never experienced a church service like this. Her three teenagers all

met our Youth Pastor. The whole family promised to return next

weekend.

2. A high‑profile guest can create a specific time to invite.

Every core member of my church would love to have a guest with them

every weekend. But its easy to think, This isnt the right time, I

ll invite them next week ‑ or the week after that, or the week after

that. With a guest speaker, theyre only with you one time. If you

miss the opportunity, itll never return. Your church members know

that. A special guest provides the This is the day! motivation to

make the invitation your people intend to make every week.

3. A high‑profile guest can create a focused time to invite.

During some stages of life, peer pressure can be a terrible thing. But

when it comes to motivating us to do the right thing, peer pressure

can be used by God. A nudge from the Holy Spirit, coupled with some

positive peer pressure is what convinced the children of Israel to

cross the Jordan. That same combination can spur a church to great

things.

During the weeks leading up to our Wow Weekend, a common question was,

Who are you invited to hear Scott Rigsby? God was at work, and so

were his people. A side benefit was that several New Songers who had

never before invited a friend to church invited someone to this event.

Hopefully theyll continue to the habit.

4. A high‑profile guest can create an excuse to upgrade your systems.

One of the best ways to get your house cleaned is to decide to host a

party. Knowing youll have guests, the whole family works extra hard

to clean their rooms and tidy the common spaces. The same can be true

when you know youre hosting a large group of guests in your church.

New Song has a lot of military members. They tend to be reassigned

every few years. So every fall we need to recruit a boatload of

servants. In the weeks leading up to Rigsby, we re‑staffed our usher

core, invited new faces onto our PromiseLand team, and relaunched a

badly‑needed parking lot ministry.

5. A high‑profile guest can create a leveraged opportunity to return.

Now that we have peoples attention, we have a small window to keep

it. So next weekend were hitting a high‑felt‑need topic: reducing

debt. Dave Ramsays materials have helped New Songers reduce thousands

of dollars of debt, so were showing Daves Basic Money Makeover

during the services next weekend. After Daves sermon, well invite

people to join a Finance Peace group for the next 13 weeks. (For those

who may be worried about us, well return to exegetical Scripture

studies by the end of the month. Ill be teaching a nine week series

through the book of Nehemiah for the rest of the fall season.)

6. A high‑profile guest can motivate drop‑outs to return.

Unique guests will not only draw newcomers to your church, they can

help draw back lapsed attenders. From time to time, fringe members can

get distracted and stop coming. Last weekend I saw several smiling

faces I hadnt seen in weeks.

7. A high‑profile guest can increase peoples love for you.

After each service I had core members and regular attenders say to me,

Pastor, thank you for bringing Scott here today. He was just what I

needed. A key component of a shepherds job is to feed his/her sheep.

Occasionally thats best done by offering them an alternative voice.

By Gods grace I dont have the story Scott Rigsby has, so I cant

offer the kind of encouragement he did.

High‑profile guests can be overused. But utilized during a few key

times of the year, they can bring a breath of fresh air and a boost of

attendees who would never otherwise be exposed to the church and the

gospel. Finding the right speakers for your congregation take a little

effort, and finding the money to cover the expenses of invitations and

an honorarium can be a challenge. But the challenge is well worth it.

Hal Seed

PastorMentor.com

Dr. Hal Seed is founding pastor of New Song Community Church in

Oceanside, CA. In the past three years, New Song has seen over 2,000

people make first time decisions for Christ. Hal is the author of

Future History: Understanding the Book of Daniel and End Times

Prophecy, Jonah: Responding to God, as well as The God Questions.

Each of these books is being used in small groups and church‑wide

campaigns around the country.

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Sermon on the Mount

- 9/1989.30

Sir Walter Scott had difficulty with the idea of "turning the other

cheek." But Jesus' words took on special meaning one day when Scott

threw a rock at a stray dog to chase it away. His aim was straighter

and his delivery stronger than he had intended, for he hit the animal

and broke its leg. Instead of running off, the dog limped over to him

and licked his hand. Sir Walter never forgot that touching response.

He said, "That dog preached the Sermon on the Mount to me as few

ministers have ever presented it." Scott said he had not found human

beings so ready to forgive their enemies.

- - - Matt 5:39 - Matthew 5:39

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Learning To Teach by Reg Grant

Learning To Teach

PermissionsHoward Hendricks tells why the best teachers are those who never stop growing.

by Reg Grant

The name Howard Hendricks has come to be synonymous with excellence in teaching. Nearly halfway through his fourth decade of teaching at Dallas Theological Seminary, he continues to ignite his students with a passion for teaching and for learning. But he doesn't stop at Dallas. Dr. Hendricks has preached and taught the Bible in more than seventy countries and can be heard on the Art of Family Living radio program. A few of his best‑selling books include Say It with Love, Heaven Help the Home, and Teaching to Change Lives.

Ingenuity in the classroom. Skill in the pulpit. His character as a Christian leader. All have combined to earn Howard Hendricks numerous honors; among them, Chairman, Center for Christian Leadership. Still, there's one title he holds above the rest: on the seminary campus he is known simply as "The Prof." That says it all. Teaching is his passion. In this interview he models the method he has shared all these years, teaching "from the overflow of a full life." Here is authentic teaching: Howard Hendricks at his best, teaching from the heart.

I can tell you are passionate about teaching. Why do you teach?

I teach for a number of reasons. I teach, first of all, because I feel that this is what God has called me to; this is what He's gifted me for.

But I also teach because I am committed to a ministry of multiplication. And I don't know of any better way to multiply one's life than building into the lives of others, many of whom are going to outlast you, who are going to be ministering and multiplying your ministry long after you've gone home to Heaven. So that's what turns me on. That's what gives me the passion.

We've all had teachers who are just processors of information. But every once in a while we get an unusually gifted teacher who can communicate not just the Word but himself or herself in the process. What is there about these teachers that hooks us on learning?

I think it's essential to remember that the effective teacher teaches out of the overflow of a full life. Our problem is that often we only see teaching as a cognitive processthe transfer of information from one mind to another mind. But in the Scriptures, we've got a whole new assignment. Jesus said, "teaching them to obey everything I commanded you." And that's a whole new ball game.

I can teach mathematics and be the most brilliant mathematician in the world and also be a first‑class pervert. But there is no way I can teach the Scriptures without that truth transforming my life. And as it transforms my life, then I'm in the best position to be used as a change agent in the lives of others.

In your book Teaching to Change Lives, you talk about teaching from the heart. Could you expand on that a little bit?

Well, the heart, in biblical thinking, embraces the totality of the human personality: intellect, emotions, and will. I believe if a person knows something thoroughly, feels something deeply, and is practicing something consistently, he's got the best leverage in teaching because he teaches not from head to head but from heart to heart.

You've also said that things of the heart are better caught than taught. Who could you look to and say, "Yeah, that person was a great teacher; that's what I want to be"?

I had a whole corps of people who slowly impacted my life, primarily because they were transformed individuals. I was led to Christ by a man who never went beyond sixth grade but who so incarnated Jesus Christ that when he presented the gospel to me, it made sense. I had a grandmother who couldn't work her way out of a wet paper bag theologically but who knew the Lord and, therefore, fleshed Him out as she handled an alcoholic husband. I saw this day after day in my life. I had a pastor who not only taught the Word but so lived it that he used to create this tremendous hunger in me for that kind of reality, that kind of experience. I would say that has been true throughout my life. The people who impacted my life mostly were those whose lives were changed by the truth and, therefore, God used them to change me.

It sounds like some of the people who impacted you most significantly had the least advanced educational backgrounds.

In many cases, that was true. Not exclusively, because there were people who were brilliant and well‑trained. But the tragedy is that often we substitute education for a transformation of life. Because we have degrees, we automatically think we've got something to communicate. And we may, intellectually. But we may not have the reality of Christ in our lives.

It seems, too, that the person with the reality of Christ has an infinite resource to draw upon for teaching, and the better‑educated person may be tempted to rely upon the education.

This is my experience. Most of us evangelicals trust in our intellect; we trust in our giftedness; we trust in our education and training; we trust in our experience. We trust in everything except the Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate transformer. I can only bring truth to the ears of an individual; only the Holy Spirit can incarnate it in the life. But I believe He loves to employ instruments who are so sensitive to His leadership in their own lives that they don't come across as frauds; they come across as real people, authentic in their experience.

You've written that if you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow. What kinds of growth are most important?

Growth in every area of life. I had a great professor who one day invited me to his home for lunch. After lunch I said to him, "What keeps you studying? You never stop learning." I will never forget his response. He said, "Howie, I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than from a stagnant pool." I believe that's what causes effective teachinga person who is changing in his thinking, who is changing in his feelings, whose attitudes are being overhauled, whose thinking is being conformed to the Scriptures, and whose life is being changed. He's not there, but he's en route.

You suggest that an incisive question for the teacher to ask himself or herself is "How have I changed latelyfor example, in the last week, in the last month, in the last year?" How have you changed lately as a teacher? How have you grown?

I would say the greatest change in my life recently has come in the area of sensitivity, not only to the culture to which Christ is calling me to minister but also to people. You know, I'm a goal‑oriented individual. And it's easy for people to get mad at me if I'm not careful. I just spent three weeks in South Africa, and I discovered that the most effective ministry I had during that time was largely the product of my own life, of what Christ has produced by way of change in me. And it apparently becomes visible to other people.

In Teaching to Change Lives, the first line of the dedication is, "To my students, my most inquisitive teachers." What did you mean?

My students are my most inquisitive teachers because they are the people for whom I exist. I don't teach to teach. I don't show up at a classroom because that's my assignment. I teach because I am desperately interested in seeing a transformation of the student's life. I have discovered that I impact students in direct proportion to my personal involvement with them. And when I become involved with them, they reverse the role because they teach me. First, they teach me what I'm not communicating; second, what I need to be communicating; and third, where I can improve in that process.

I spend a lot of time asking students, "Tell me what's coming through in this course. Tell me where I can improve." And in their evaluations I pick up the greatest hints on teaching that I could ever get. It's much better than taking a course, much better than reading a book.

So you believe that part of good teaching is learning to be a good listener?

To me, the greatest myth in teaching is that teaching is telling. Most teachers talk, talk, talk. But I am convinced that the greater skill to develop, and the harder skill, is that of listening. I find that students come to me and say, "Boy, Prof, I'd like to learn to be a better communicator." And I say, "How badly? Because what I discover in spending time with you is that you talk too much. And great communicators don't talk that much. They listen a great deal. Therefore, when they talk, they have something to say."

It sounds like you're saying the student who comes to you looking to be a great communicator is focusing on doing teaching as opposed to being a teacher. What is the difference between doing and being?

Well, doing primarily focuses on skills. And skills are essential. But teaching, in my judgment, focuses on passion. It focuses on a strong desire that the student will learn. That's why when I go into a classroom, people will often say to me, "You've been teaching us for forty‑some years. How do you get so excited about it?" I say, "I get excited about it because these students have never heard it before, and they've got to hear it. That's my only excuse for existence. If they don't learn, I haven't taught."

So it's our responsibility as teachers that they learn? How can I as a teacher be responsible for the learning of three hundred students in a class or for my Sunday school class that has eighteen sixth‑ graders in it?

You see, if a teacher can see his role as primarily that of a learner, then he becomes a model for the student. If the teacher thinks of himself as the ultimate expert, the one who has all the answers, then obviously the students will think, Once I get his material and memorize it, then I'll be as expert as he is. But it's much deeper than that. A teacher who not only knows but is also learning has this incredible passion that will be transferred to the student.

I like to put it this way, Reg. When I go into a classroom as a teacher, I assume unlimited liability for what goes on. When I go into a classroom as a student, I assume unlimited liability for what I'm learning. Put those together, and you've got an invincible teaching situation. The problem in most teaching today is that the students are blaming the teachers and the teachers are blaming the students. As a result, both sides miss out. I want to set an exampleI want my students to see that I always come prepared. Therefore, I'm expecting them to come prepared. I'm modeling their responsibility by my own responsibility.

I've heard you suggest that one of the important factors for a teacher is authentic love for a student. If we have those students who are hard to love, how can we start to love them authentically?

I think it begins with the realization that God loves me unconditionally. A few moments of reflection upon the horror of my past life and the realization that while I was yet a sinner, Christ died for me, has transformed my whole attitude toward students. I see them not in terms of what they are but in terms of what they might become. Therefore, I often like to think of a teacher as a person who hangs a picture around the neck of his students of what those students might conceivably be in ten, fifteen, or twenty years. So often we are focused on what they are now. The kid is disinterested, couldn't care less about what is going on, etc. And yet, the thrill of teaching is igniting that student.

Students have their reasons, too. A student who is unlovely is usually the person who requires more love than anyone else, particularly in his unloveliness. The student who is disinterested is usually disinterested for a specific reason, and I've got to find out what motivates him. That's why I am convinced you cannot motivate a person apart from intense interpersonal relationships. You can impress someone at a distance, but you can only impact him up close. And the closer I get to the student, the better able I am to motivate him and to convey, "Hey, I really do love you!"

In his book Working the Angles, Eugene Peterson calls for a return to prayer and Scripture reading and ministry to our neighborthe basics of pastoral ministry. Does this apply to teaching?

I don't think I have ever been effective in teaching apart from a prayer ministry. I find that my impact on a student is in direct proportion to my praying for that student. It is then that I develop a passion and the compassion for that individual. I don't see him just as a number or a name on my grade book. I see him as an individual not only for whom Christ died but also to whom God has given gifts and for whom He has a distinct purpose.

Prof, you have so many students. How do you pray for them all?

Well, I do it in a number of ways. First, I pray through my grade book on a regular basis. Second, I pray for people as I encounter them. I always arrive at class early. And often, before that bell rings, I'll be walking around and talking to them: "How's it going? What happened with your wife?" And sending up what Guy King calls "sky telegrams" to the Lord. Or I'm walking to chapel, and I encounter students that I know have real needs, and I pray for them. Or they come out to the office, and we spend some time in prayer. I try to seek a variety of ways of praying for my students without putting myself under some legalistic bond. But again, I would have to say that I impact them in direct proportion to my prayer for them. So if there is not that much prayer, there's not that much impact.

Are there other spiritual disciplines that are essential to an effective ministry of teaching?

Yes, there are a number of them. One is the whole area of Bible study. I find that I have got to develop a personal Bible study program by which I feed my soul. So I study something other than what I am teaching here at the seminary or preaching out on the road because I find that if I'm not, I'm like the tailor who is taking everybody else's measurements but never measuring a suit of clothes for himself. I find that is my lifeline. That's what keeps the passion strong. Then you are teaching out of the overflow of a full life.

The second thing that has been very helpful to me is my personal involvement in ministry. I don't go into a classroom to tell them about what I used to do; I tell them about what I am doing and the people who are coming to Christ and the people who are responding to the truth I am teaching, etc., in a variety of ministries. This is why I don't hang around here that much. You dry up and blow away on a seminary campus. So I became involved with the Dallas Cowboys. I have become involved with a variety of lost people. It keeps the edge on my teaching.

A third thing I have discovered is that I have got to get time alone. Most teachers and most people in ministry are behind in their think time. So periodically, Jeanne and I take off for the East Texas woods and hide down there for a couple of days and just spend time in the Word and in prayer and in thinking and studying. I've found that when I come back from doing that, boy, it's the greatest!

It's odd for many of us in Western societywho are so product‑orientedto think about having time to do nothing but think. When you have that time, how do you spend it?

I do it in a number of ways. Prayer, to me, has been very, very helpful. I'm diabetic, so I have to walk three miles every day. It takes me about forty minutes. That's forty minutes of prayer time. It's revolutionized my prayer life.

Secondly, I find it helpful to interact with certain people. Not everybody turns your crank. So I hand‑pick individuals who motivate me, who stretch my thinking. One of them is my wife. She reads extensively and is wonderful to interact with.

At other times, I love to sit down by myself and take a subject and a blank sheet of paper and just start writing. I start thinking about all different areas. I have found that I come up with some of my best stuff doing that. It isn't out of a vacuum because it is surrounded with a lot of reading, a lot of interaction with my colleagues, with my students, with friends. It's out of that that the think time becomes significant.

Let's switch gears and talk about integrity and teaching. Why is integrity an important part of the communication process?

It's the most important because ultimately we are dealing with truth. And if I cannot trust you, then I'm not sure I'm about to believe what you claim is truth. I mean, I may know objectively that that is so. But I haven't seen it in your life. And if, conversely, I see it in your life, it makes it much more communicable to me.

I'd also say that integrity results when a person is willing to be transparent and vulnerable and can say to the student, "Look, I blew it! I violated the very principles I'm teaching you, and I don't play in a different league from you. I told you if you do this, you would pay for it. And I'm paying for it because I violated my principles."

Or the teacher who is willing to say, "I don't know. That's a good question. Let me write it down. I'll see if I can find an answer for you." The greatest New Testament professor I ever had was Everett Harrison. A student asked a question in his class here at the seminary, and he said, "Young man, that's the most perceptive question I've ever been asked on this passage. If I were to give you an answer now, it would be very superficial. But I'm going to work on it. I'll find an answer for you. Are there any other good questions like that?" Well, he just went to the top of the pile in our book. Think of all of the professors who when asked a question would say, "We consequently therefrom whereas as all people understand..." And I know he doesn't know it. But to be willing to admit that I don't know it...

Yeah, but that kind of transparency is so threatening. What do you do when you're teaching a seventh‑ or eighth‑grade class, and this kid looks you in the eye and says, "You're scared." And you want to say, "No, I'm not scared. I'm fine!" We retreat behind the safety of a head approach, saying, "Well, if I just give them the material, that will be enough."

See, I think it is so important to communicate to a student that you are in process, because that's what you're trying to develop in hima lifelong process of learning. Nobody has arrived. If Paul could say, "Now we see through a glass darkly... now I know in part," then I'm in pretty good company when I don't have all the answers. I cannot as a finite person provide all the infinite answers. So I need to let him know that. But ultimately, it goes back to your security factor. And if my security only resides in me, then I'm going to be very threatened. If my security is ultimately in Jesus Christ, then I don't mind telling them, "I don't know."

Is there a question that I haven't asked here that you would like to answer? Is there something you would like to address?

I think if I only had one thing to leave with an individual, it would probably be what we began with. And that is, teaching, to me, is a passion. It's not a job; it's a ministry. And if it's a job, then I'm going to burn out and grow tired of it. I want to go into that class for the 150th time realizing that I know more now about why you need to know this than I knew when I first started. I had a student come up to me some time ago after class and say, "Prof, do you really think we need this?" To which I said, "No, not really. That's why I've been teaching it for forty‑three years." (Laughter) But this is what you get, and that's the exciting part of the process.

Sidebar: Just A Sunday School Teacher?

Sidebar: The Teacher As Reader

On Your Own: Rate Your Passion

Reg Grant is Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary. He works extensively in theatre, film and creative writing. He has published a novel, Ebony Moon (NavPress,1993) and has a second one in the works. Reg and his family live in Dallas, Texas.

On Your Own: Rate Your Passion

To see how dedicated you are to teaching and your students, take the following quiz. Circle the number that best describes you.

1. How much time do you spend each week on personal growth?

1. 30 minutes or less

2. 1 hour or less

3. At least 2 hours

4. At least 3 hours

5. More than 4 hours

2. How often do you spend time with your students outside of class?

1. Never

2. Once in

a while

3. Fairly

regularly

4. At least once a week

5. Often

3. How much do you know about your students' personal lives?

1. Almost nothing

2. A few things about a few students

3. Something about each student

4. Know each student fairly well

5. Know each

student intimately

4. How good are you at looking past the faults/weaknesses of your students to see their potential in Christ?

1. Never think of their potential

2. Once in a while think of their potential

3. Can see potential in most of them

4. Can see potential in all of them

5. Can see limitless potential and almost never dwell on their faults

Select one area in which you would like to improve. What steps can you take to grow in this area?

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38 Ways To Wake Up Your Class - by Marlene Lefever

Try these techniques to help students get excited about learning.

by Marlene Lefever

Illustration by Terry Julien

"My teens look as if they'd rather be dusted than inspired to action," a Sunday school teacher admitted. "They show wallet pictures and talk about Saturday's game and who dated whom. I can tell I'm talking because I can feel my mouth moving. So why aren't they listening?"

All too often the answer to that teacher's question is, "I don't listen because it's boring. Why listen?

I know what's coming." The teacher who leaves class thinking, Great class! I learned more than my students, may in fact be failing. Those who participate learn most.

Fortunately, there is a practically limitless number of ways in which you can learn yourself and still focus class time on your students. As you read the following ideas, mark the ones you think would work best with those you teach. Then choose at least one to try next week!

1. Study the passage you will teach at your own level before you prepare to teach it to children or teens. Read the passage in two or three versions and perhaps a paraphrase. The Message by Eugene Peterson, for example, could add new insights into familiar passages.

2. Have students break up into small groups, then study a short passage and come up with three questions about the passage. These should be questions that require high‑level thinking, rather than simple content questions. One question might be structured for the person who is a seeker, not yet a Christian. Another might deal with how this section fits into the redemption story. A third might be life‑related, something on how this verse helps Christians live their lives today.

3. Use expression when you read the Bible aloud to the class.

4. Encourage controlled noise! In a classroom where the teacher does all the talking, the teacher may also be doing most of the learning. Students learn when they interact.

5. Affirm silence. Ask questions and allow students time to think about their answers. If the teacher jumps in too quickly, students who are gathering their thoughts will never express them.

6. Provide comfortable seating. Some people learn best at tables, but many others, especially teens, need to spread themselves over the carpet or slouch into beanbag chairs. Students participate more when their seating style is accommodated.

7. Simple inductive Bible study gets youth and adults studying God's Word for themselves. Pick a short passage. Ask the students to pretend this is the only passage of Scripture they have ever read. Ask them to find what they can know or assume about your topic from that passage. For John 3:16, the assignment could be, "Record everything you can know or assume about God from this verse." When students have shared their findings, encourage them to corroborate what they found with other scriptures.

8. Ask students to close their eyes as you read Scripture or a Bible story to them. Encourage them to place themselves in the setting. Allow time for them to tell what they "saw" and felt as the story was being read.

9. A method that gets groups excited about the Bible is scriptural choral reading. Arrange a section of Scripture as you would a choral piecewith solos, duets, trios, choruses, etc.but have the students read aloud instead of sing.

10. Different students learn best in different ways: 20 percent learn best by hearing; 40 percent by seeing; the rest by doing. Every lesson needs to include methods that allow auditory students, visual students, and tactile/kinesthetic students to succeed.

11. Miming allows teens and adults to symbolically act out difficult concepts. Students work in groups of three to five to develop a mime that lasts fifteen seconds and demonstrates through actions rather than words concepts such as Church, family, mission, and service.

12. Very young children will enjoy acting out the Bible story as the teacher reviews it with them. Every child gets involved. The whole class helps row Jesus across the lake. Everyone picks up fragments of food from the feeding of the five thousand.

13. Augment role‑playing by assigning "attitudes" to the participants. Draw expressions on little round faces and assign the players the attitude on their face. Have them apply that attitude to their role in the exercise.

14. Ask people to express answers in colors and explain why they picked the color they did. This encourages people to think creatively, and it also helps equalize people who are familiar with the "correct" answers and those who are new to Bible study. Examples: What color is your attitude toward people of different nationalities? What color was the prophet Micah's attitude toward the powerless and oppressed?

15. Make more effective use of pictures in older elementary, youth, and adult classes because pictures increase retention. Ask students to look at a picture illustrating the passage they will be studying and answer questions like these:

Why did the artist pick this perspective for the picture?

What was the artist trying to communicate through this picture?

What is the tone of this picture?

Is the picture biblically correct?

If you were asked to add three more panels to this picture showing other portions of Scripture with the same theme, what would you paint?

16. Creative homework may capture the imaginations of your students. Try assignments like these: Tape‑record nonchurchgoers answering the question "What is your opinion of our church?" Take photographs of places in the community where God's love needs to be felt. Videotape the testimonies of three shut‑ins sharing how they came to Christ.

17. Don't ignore the sense of smell in teaching. What I learn about Jesus as the Bread of Life may be remembered longer if the smell of baking bread is in the classroom. Perfume may remind me that my life is to be a sweet smell before the Lord. How might the smell of an onion, a rose, or talcum powder be used to trigger learning?

18. Use patterns of poetry found in the Bible to help teens and adults respond to what they have studied. In an acrostic, the key word of the lesson is used to write a prayer or response to what has been learned. If the key word is LOVE, the first line of the acrostic starts with L, the second with O, and so on. In a form of poetry called synonymous parallelism, the first line states a complete fact, and the second line expresses the same thought through the use of synonyms. Isaiah 52:6 is a good example: "Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it.'" In another type, antithetical parallelism, the thought is made clear through contrast. The first line is the opposite of the second line. See Romans 6:23.

19. Use a speakerphone to expand your teaching. Invite a geographically distant guest who has expertise in your lesson topic to call your class on a speakerphone. Students should be prepared to ask questions and interact with him or her.

20. Encourage students from elementary age on to phone a prayer partner once a week. At the teen and adult levels this partner may also be an accountability friend, someone who checks to make sure what is learned in a Bible study is being lived all week.

21. Rethink discussion questions so they force students to think beyond the content to what the content really means. "Why" questions are better than fill‑in‑the‑blank questions. Instead of asking, "Who were Jesus' twelve disciples?" ask, "Based on what you know about the lives of the twelve disciples, what would they have said discipleship is?"

22. About 30 percent of students are excellent at memorization. Affirm them in Bible memory, but also affirm those students who may not be able to recite verses perfectly by giving several learning options in addition to memorization. Elementary children may learn what a verse means and live that verse during the week; an adult can sign a paper telling what they did. Young teens may want to show they know the verse by writing a paraphrase of it or illustrating it with a craft.

23. Encourage brainstorming. Topics should be broad: "What could this class do for Jesus if we had no time or money limitations?" "What are some ways churches in our town could get involved in the education of students who go to public school?" Remind the students that there is no bad or dumb idea. All ideas are equal. In fact, the very idea that seems laughable may be the idea that sparks an excellent one.

24. Find an assistant, someone who is not ready to teach just yet but is willing to get comfortable with the process. Assistants are key people in the multiplication of our teaching ministries.

25. If you're teaching school‑age children, get permission to spend a day visiting classes in the schools they attend. You'll learn more about them and how better to relate the Bible to their lives.

26. Start a short story file. Many students will remember content by recalling the stories teachers tell. Magazines such as Readers Digest and Discipleship Journaloften include storieseither separately or within articlesthat can illustrate a point. Look for stories about women as well as men. Most magazine articles start with story grabbers. These can be excellent resources to stimulate discussion.

27. Some students will enjoy writing a song to affirm what they are studying. Start with a familiar melody and let students write new words. If the results are good, photocopy the song and start a class chorus book.

28. Use music tapes. A secular or Christian song could lead students into the Bible to find answers. Lyrics can be good discussion starters"How would you advise the person singing this song?" Many teenagers learn best with background music, so play music during the Bible study. Music during discussion times can also make it easier to volunteer an answer.

29. Teach in parables just as the Master Teacher did. If you've seen someone rescued from drowning, relate this to a spiritual truth. If your child is always wandering away from you at the shopping center and crying when she realizes she is lost, relate her situation to a struggling Christian's relationship to Christ. Finding parables in the everyday is easy once you build the habit of looking for them.

30. Try pair discussion instead of group discussion to get everyone involved. Many people who would never volunteer to speak in front of the whole class will be very comfortable talking to one other person. Increase discussion benefits by having two pairs join to share what they have found.

31. In triad discussions students label themselves A, B, and C. When a topic is assigned, A and B discuss and C listens. Then B and C talk and A listens. Finally A and C talk and B listens. Then people share what they heard, not what they said. An example of a topic that would lend itself to this type of discussion is, "How did you learn what it means to be an adult?"

32. Use dramatic readings or reader's theater in class. Parts are read, not memorized. When you find a drama that fits your lesson aim, ask expressive readers to present short portions of it to the class. A section from the play Waiting for Godot will lead a class into discussion of what life without God really means. Assigning parts to Calvin Miller's allegory The Singer will encourage teens and adults to rethink the incarnation and death of Christ.

33. Use very short video clips to illustrate a truth of a lesson or to get students involved in the topic. Don't rule out secular videos. For example, the football coach's pep talk in the movie Rudy might introduce a lesson on how we encourage each other to live the Christian life.

34. Try cooperative learning experiments. Place students into support groups of four to six people for one to three months. Set some goals for each group, and make each member of the group responsible for every other member meeting the goals. Goals could include regular attendance, memorization of a Bible chapter, participation in a project, and a hospitality outreach event.

35. Use small paper clips or pipe cleaners to make sculptures that illustrate something about a lesson. People twist the paper clip and then share what the shape represents. In a lesson on learning to trust God even when we can't see where that trust will lead, students might twist a paper clip to illustrate how they think Moses felt when God told him to lead Israel out of bondage. Students who have difficulty talking in class often "hide" behind their sculptures, and that gives them the freedom to share.

36. Bring in items for show‑and‑tell, even for older elementary, teen, and adult classes. A puzzle with one piece missing could illustrate a Christian who has a blind spot in his life where Christ is not in control. A singing canary could inspire students to show joy to God even when they feel caged in on all sides.

37. Exchange florescent bulbs for natural light bulbs. Many students, especially younger children, are uncomfortable in a room lit by florescent light. Some children even develop low‑grade headaches. Preschoolers and early elementary students operate almost entirely on a feeling level, so if they don't feel good about their environment, they won't like what they are learning there. The older your students, the lighter the room should be.

38. Pray for every student by name every week, and encourage students to do the same for you. Let them know that the success of this class is not due to how much human effort the teacher expends. Only with the Holy Spirit's help will the Bible become an open book and change lives.

Marlene Lefever, manager of church relations at David C. Cook Church Ministries, is the author of two textbooks for volunteer teachers: Creative Teaching Methods (Cook, 1985) and a book on how students learn, to be released in 1994. She wrote this article because "I believe being a teacher is an awesome responsibility and a great joy."

Marlene speaks to approximately ten thousand Sunday school teachers annually and produces a quarterly newsletter, Teacher Touch, which contains stories of what God is doing through teachers. (Call 1‑800‑533‑2201 for more information.)

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Lessons From The Master - How You Can Be A Master Teacher? by Monte Unger

Earlier this year in Denver, Colorado, a waitress was kidnapped. She fled her abductor and flagged down a passing motorist on an interstate. The rescuing motorist was named Jaquie Creazzo.

As the two drove to the hospital, the kidnapper caught them, shot the motorist, and reabducted the waitress.

A newspaper headline said, "Failure to Save Woman Pains Good Samaritan."

The story began, "Jaquie Creazzo, the good Samaritan who helped a woman fleeing her abductor, doesn't feel like a hero," then went on to say that Creazzo was shot twice and will never walk again. The woman she tried to help was eventually found murdered.

Quite a story.

With one major fallacy.

Jaquie Creazzo is not from Samaria, a hilly region halfway between Jerusalem and Galilee in present‑day Israel, over 6,800 miles from Colorado. Jaquie is an American living in Denver. Did the reporter get her notes jumbled?

There was no mistake. Everyone who read this newspaper article knew what the reporter meant by calling Jaquie Creazzo a "good Samaritan." The newspaper reference came from the parable Jesus told of the good Samaritan in Lk. 10:25‑37.

Think of it: A man told a story twenty centuries ago, and today the meaning of that story is common knowledgehousehold wordsto people of a different culture, in a different time, and speaking a different language.

What power in the words of a Master Teacher!

Historian, writer, and teacher Henry Adams said that "a teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." With the teaching of Jesus, it hasn't stopped: it has transcended time and distance and culture.

This is an aim each of us can have in our own teaching. We can learn from this Master Teacher so we can also affect eternity.

What made Jesus a master teacher was the combination of His multitude of teaching techniques and the underlying principles that pervaded that teaching. Much has been written about His teaching techniques, so this article will analyze four of the principles that undergirded His three years of ministry.

1. The Principle of Preparation

A master teacher spends much time learning his or her subject.

Terry Smith, a teacher‑consultant who coaches speakers internationally on how to make successful presentations, says, "According to Best Sermons, a religious magazine, it takes clergymen about seven hours to prepare a twenty‑minute talk. That's more than a twenty‑to‑one ratio. I subscribe to the theory of making things harder for myself in order to make them easier for my audience. For a brand‑new presentation, my ratio is one hour of preparation for every minute I plan to speak. This is the preparation level at which I feel comfortable that I'm giving my very best."

Jesus studied and prepared all His life for His final three years of intensive teaching ministry. It started when he was twelve and was found "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Lk. 2:46). Even at that young age, "Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Lk. 2:47). Between the ages of twelve and thirty, Lk. 2:52 says that He "grew in wisdom."

Jesus knew the Scriptures better than the learned men of His day who were the teachers of the Law. Time and time again He pointed out something they'd overlooked, such as in Mt. 19:4 when He said, "Haven't you read...?'" and then spelled out God's deeper truths. This is as it should be: Master teachers know more about the subject than their studentsthat is why they're teaching them.

And master teachers continue to prepare themselves, an important part of which is following Jesus' example of taking time in solitude for prayer and rest (Mt. 14:13, Mt. 14:23).

Jesus' preparedness was one of the elements that gave Him authority. With authority, you can base your teaching on knowledge, not on being authoritarian.

2. The Principle of Humble Authority

A master teacher serves his or her students by exhibiting nonauthoritarian authority.

Early on in the gospels we learn this about Jesus: "The crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Mt. 7:28‑29). Their teachers were strict authoritarians more concerned with traditions than with the essence of the Law.

Jesus exhibited authority but was not authoritarian. There is a difference. To illustrate the difference, here is a story about a little girl's prayer that didn't count.

Once I was sitting at a breakfast table with missionaries and teachers. The week of meetings was over. Messages had been preached, prayers had been prayed, and the Word had been taught.

An elder teacher appointed himself to be in charge of prayer at our table of ten. He asked a young father to pray for the meal. The father nodded, then looked down at his five‑year‑old daughter and said, "Dear, would you like to thank Jesus?"

She smiled, folded her hands, and looked up to her mother. The mother, helping with the words, said, "Lord Jesus, we thank You..."

The girl softly echoed, "Lord Jesus, we thank You..." in her curling, captivating voice, never taking her eyes from her mother's face.

It was beautiful to watch, this love interplay between mother, child, and God.

The mother continued, with the girl responding at each word of the simple prayer. Then, "In Jesus' name. Amen."

We all looked up, smiling and glowing. I was going to say, "That must have been one of the loveliest prayers God has heard all week," when the silence was smashed by the hard voice of the elder teacher. He looked the young father in the eyes and said, enunciating each word crisply, "Will you now pray for the meal?"

It was a command. Harsh. The voice had gravel and ice chips in it.

Everyone was absolutely silent. A beautiful moment had been shattered... irreparably... forever.

The father paused. He looked long into the eyes of the elder teacher, but he bowed and gave simple thanks for the meal. This prayer we hardly heard. It was far less beautiful than the little girl's. It was perfunctory. We were thinking of the harsh teacher. We were thinking of how, though a teacher, he did not teach this day.

Psychologist Carl Rogers once described teaching as a "delicate, demanding, and a truly exalted calling. In true teaching there is no place for the authoritarian, nor the person who is on an ego trip.'"

The elder teacher was both authoritarian and on an ego trip. He wanted his way to be obeyed, regardless. He was teaching from tradition: that one must pray before a meal; that an adult must give the prayer; and that he, the elder, must be obeyed.

This is nothing new in religious circles. Jesus spent much of His time combatting the authoritarian "teachers of the law." In Mk. 7:8 He says, "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.'"

There is a difference between authoritarianism and one who teaches with authority.

Philippians 2:5, Phil. 2:7 says, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... [who] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." If you want to be a great teacher and emulate Christ, humble yourself and serve your students.

3. The Principle of Compassion

A master teacher shows compassion for his or her students.

J. Oswald Sanders, former director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, said, "It is possible to have a passion for righteousness, and yet lack compassion... Righteousness can be cold and hard and unfeeling."

In the story about the little girl's prayer, we learn another lesson: the elder teacher didn't show compassion.

Jesus modeled compassion. He especially loved little children. In Lk. 18:16, He said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Can you imagine how the little girl must have felt when she realized that her prayer "didn't count"? Can you imagine what Jesus would have done had He been sitting at that breakfast table?

Once I traveled to Asia to write stories for a magazine. Upon my return, I was the guest at a dinner party where people asked questions about the mission fields I had visited. One man asked, "Where do you most have to clobber those Oriental Christians?"

The room was silent; then a quiet voice said, "We don't have to clobber them, we just love them."

The questioner was not speaking from compassion, but wanted to "clobber" people to "straighten them out" and "get them in line" with what he regarded as holy, disciplined living.

When Peter tried to emulate Jesus by walking on water, and began sinking, it would have been a great opportunity for Jesus to "clobber" Peter, to let him sink and swallow a few mouthfuls of water. Then He could have given him a good tongue‑lashing and taught him a lesson he'd never forget.

Instead, "Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. You of little faith,' he said, why did you doubt?'" (Mt. 14:31). He cared for His disciple and helped him. He had compassion on the crowds (Mt. 9:36, Mt. 14:14, Mt. 15:32), on the blind men (Mt. 20:34), on the man with leprosy (Mk. 1:41), and for all of Jerusalem (Lk. 13:34). In all of these interactions and others, He taught His disciples about compassion.

While talking to the rich young man who had obeyed all the commandments but could not give up his riches, "Jesus looked at him and loved him" (Mk. 10:21). Yes, Jesus spoke to the young man with authority, but also with love, not rigid authoritarianism. How did Mark know that Jesus loved the young man? Mark knew Jesus. He'd seen that look of compassion many times.

4. The Principle of Awareness

A master teacher is acutely aware of his or her students, the environment, and the teaching process.

A good teacher has "antennae" that absorb everything about the subtle and dynamic interplay in the teacher‑subject‑student process, the three elements present in every teaching episode.

The elder teacher in the story about the little girl had absolutely no sense of what was happening in the drama being played out before him. He didn't sense the beauty of the moment. His single‑minded authoritarianism blocked out everything else, making him numb to the truth.

This is one reason a good teacher maintains eye contact with the audience. The teacher not only wants to keep the teaching personal, but he or she watches for nuances, indicators, flickers of disinterest, shadows of doubt, subtle noddings of agreement, or the pulling back in resistance.

Jesus had absorptive antennae that kept Him in tune with everything going on around Him. He knew of that special touch of the bleeding woman:

She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

Lk. 8:44‑46

He was aware of the situation, even in the midst of a jostling crowd.

He was aware that day in the Temple when the widow put only a small amount of money into the treasury. It became a teaching point, and to this day, like "the good Samaritan," the "widow's mite" is widely quoted, even in secular circles.

When He taught the multitude for three days, you'd think that at least one of the twelve disciples would have noticed that the people were hungry. But who noticed their hunger? Jesus. He said, "I have compassion for these people" (Mt. 15:32).

And Jesus was aware of what people were thinking. Many times He played mental chess with the scribes. He was already far in advance of their own thoughts, waiting for them to catch up, and when they did He tripped them. Matthew 9:4 says Jesus knew their thoughts. He knew their thoughts because He had prepared; He was aware in each situation of the direction the conversation would go. Because He knew their philosophy, He knew what they would say next.

Teachers Are Change Agents

"To learn is to change. Education is a process that changes the learner," says George Leonard, award‑winning writer and educational consultant.

Yet we fear change. American social philosopher Eric Hoffer says, "It is my impression that no one really likes the new. We are afraid of it. Even in slight things the experience of the new is rarely without some stirring of foreboding."

Every teacher before and after Jesus has faced the challenge of changing the student and yet, at the same time, has been faced head‑on with the student's fear of change.

Jesus had a particularly difficult dilemma: How to pass on truths that would become a major world religion through only twelve key men. He would also have to teach them how to teach. But He only had time to teach the truths, not to give seminars on teaching. He solved His dilemma by being a living model of master teaching. He was a walking educational seminar.

To be successful, He taught complex truths in common, simple ways. Charles C. Ryrie, former president and professor at the Philadelphia College of Bible, was one of author Rick Yohn's professors. Yohn says, "Dr. Ryrie's teaching is built on the philosophy, The man who says it most simply, knows it best.' Anybody can make the simple difficult, but it takes a gifted teacher to make the difficult understandable." This is precisely what Jesus did.

Jesus came as a teacher, lived as a teacher, and left as a teacher. When He first saw His disciples He said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Mk. 1:17). During His three years with them, He taught them how to be fishers of men. The last time He saw His disciples on earth, He challenged them to carry on this special fishing which would be called disciplemaking and would require much teaching. He said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19‑20, emphasis added).

And because they did that, today people in Denver, Colorado, and around the world readily understand such phrases as "good Samaritan," "go the extra mile," "the prodigal son," "the widow's mite," "a house divided against itself cannot stand," "physician, heal thyself"all phrases seen in newspapers, magazines, and literature and heard in conversationall because of the life and teachings of a Master Teacher.

Sidebar: Ten Commandments Of A Sunday School Teacher

On Your Own: Is My Life an Example?

Monte Unger, formerly the communications director for The Navigators now directs the Writing Institute. He is the editor of tweny published books and has written hundreds of articles for newspapers and magazines, Christian and secular. He teaches writing workshops around the United States and internationally.

Monte says, "Teaching is part of everyone's life. Even those who aren't 'teachers' have to teach at some time in their lives, either as parents, giving a talk for their business, or explaining how to start the power mower to the neighbor who wants to borrow it. There have been many great teachers throughout history, but the best are those who not only teach their subject but also change lives in the process."

On Your Own: Is My Life an Example?

The four principles Monte Unger discusses address the teacher's heart. What others learn from you may be influenced more by your life than by the content of your lessons. Read 1 Tim. 4:11‑16.

Verse 12 lists several areas in which you can set an example. Jot down your thoughts on how you "stack up" in each area.

1. Speech

2. Life

3. Love

4. Faith

5. Purity

Select one area in which you would like to improve. What steps will you take to grow in this area?

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10 Commandments Of A Sunday School Teacher by Henrietta Mears

Sidebar To: Lessons From The Master

Sidebar: Ten Commandments Of A Sunday School Teacher

by Henrietta Mears

I. I will win the personal allegiance of every student in my Sunday School class to the Lord and Master by talking, writing, and prayer. I will expect a decision on the part of each one, and I will make sure that that decision is based on facts. No boy or girl will I ever give up on as unreachable.

II. I will not think my work over when my pupil has made his decision for Christ. I will help him to realize how necessary daily Bible reading and prayer are. I will also put helpful books in his hands and will encourage him to unite with God's people. I will show him the importance of church work. In all this, I will stay close until he is established, remaining at all times accessible to him.

III. I will see that he finds a definite place in some specified task. I will not rest until every student is an out‑and‑out aggressive Christian, for God has a place for each one to serve.

IV. I will bring Christianity out of the unreal into everyday life. I will show my students the practical things they should be doing as Christians. The ministrations that the world needs so much todaymeat for the hungry, drink for the thirstyare judgment‑day tests of genuine Christianity (Mt. 25).

V. I will seek to help each one discover the will of God, because the Master can use every talent. I will try to see in them what God sees. Michelangelo saw the face of an angel in a discarded stone. Christ saw a writer in a tax gatherer, a preacher in a fisherman, a world evangelist in a murderer. He takes the foolish things and the weak and despised to work His purposes.

VI. I will instill a divine discontent into the mind of everyone who can do more than he is doing, not by telling him the pettiness of his life, but by giving him a vision of great things to be done enthusiastically, passionately.

VII. I will make it easy for anyone to come to me with the deepest experiences of his inner life, not by urging, but by sympathy and understanding. I will never let anyone think I am disappointed in him.

VIII. I will keep the cross of Christ central in the Christian life. It is great to be out where the fight is strong, to be where the heaviest troops belong and to fight there for God and man.

IX. I will pray as I have never prayed before for wisdom and power, believing God's promise that "if any of you lack wisdom, let him askand it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5).

X. I will spend and be spent in this battle. I will not seek rest and ease. I will not think that freshness of face holds beauty in comparison with the glory of heaven. I will seek fellowship with the "man of sorrowsacquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3), as He walks through this stricken world. I will not fail Him.

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Free Course - Introduction To Public Speaking

ML111 ‑ Introduction To Public Speaking

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Introduction To Public Speaking

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Professor:

Haddon W. Robinson, Ph.D.

Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching and the Senior Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Gordon‑Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts

Course Description:

This Fast Trax course talks about a way to overcome dullness by taking the material and putting it together, not just according to a logical outline, but according to a psychological outline. We want to speak as a listener likes it. The course is taught by Dr. Haddon Robinson who is widely regarded as an expert in the area of preaching. Dr. Robinson was named one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English‑speaking world in a 1996 Baylor University poll. He is also co‑director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Gordon‑Conwell

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The Biblical Basis for Christian Preaching - Dr. Dennis Phelps

Dr. Dennis Phelps is Professor of Preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary,

where he occupies the J. D. Grey Chair of Preaching.

Introduction

What is the basis for preaching as one of the primary expressions of the Christian

faith both inside and outside of the Church? Is preaching only a cultural aspect

leftover from the earliest days of the struggling, persecuted Church, or is there a legitimate

and biblical basis for the Church to continue to utilize preaching as an expression of her

faith?

The thesis of this paper is that a biblical basis exists for Christian preaching. This

thesis will be defended by utilizing a bifocal approach in examining the above questions. The

first (and major) part will focus on the biblical basis of Christian preaching as a method of

communication and instruction. The second part will focus on the biblical basis of the

content of Christian preaching.

Phillips Brookss concept of preaching as the communication of divine truth through

human personality to other persons will be the operative definition used throughout this

paper.1 The traditional Protestant canon will serve as the primary source. The method

employed will be a survey of the biblical materials in the canon related to preaching. Use of

both the Old Testament (O.T.) and New Testament (N.T.) reflects two of the three sources

for the development of Christian preaching, Hebrew religion and the Christian gospel (the

third source being ancient oratory).2 The Bibles authority for guidance in matters of faith

and practice is presupposed. A secondary purpose of this paper is to provide a biblical basis

and introduction to a study of the history of Christian preaching across the centuries.

John R. W. Stott began the opening chapter of Between Two Worlds with the

assertion, Preaching is indispensable to Christianity. Without preaching a necessary part of

its [Christianitys] authenticity has been lost.3 Assuming this intimacy does indeed exist, what

1Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 5‑8,

14‑28.

2See Edwin Charles Dargan, A History of Preaching (New York: Hodder and

Stoughton, 1905), 1:14.

3John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982),

15.

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is the foundation? This section explores four biblical bases for the intimacy between

Christianity and preaching as a method of Christian communication and instruction.

The Historical Basis

O.T. Antecedents

In the Genesis record God is described as speaking creation into existence.4 Shortly

after mankinds creation he is entrusted with the responsibility of using words to name the

reality surrounding him, including all animal life.5 One does not progress very farr into the

Protestant canon before being confronted with the biblical writers understanding of words

communicating power, whether spoken by God or persons.

The office of the priest supplied another O.T. antecedent for Christian preaching.

The priestly acts of Enoch, Noah, Isaac, and Jacob included speaking words of counsel from

the Lord.6 By the time of Moses and Aaron the office of priest had become formally

established.7 The nature of the office implied a divine choice8 and consecration.9 It was a

religious order, not a political one. Priestism was denied through the action of the people in

laying their hands on the heads of their sacrifices and freely confessing their sins to God

alone. Their consciences were free and unhindered. The office of the priest represented life,

not death. Its function implied representing all the people, offering sacrifices, and

interceding on the peoples behalf.10 However, the office of priest fell into suspicion,

laziness, and immorality. The sense of a divine call began to be lost.11 One only can speculate

that if the priests had remained faithful to their tasks and retained a higher sense of divine

calling the need may have diminished for as many prophets which later arose in Israel to

proclaim Gods message. However, the priests responsibility to speak words of counsel

from God contributed to the historical tradition inherited by the Church in using preaching

as a means of instruction and communication.12

4Gen. 1:3‑27.

5Gen. 2:19‑20.

6Jude 14; 2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 27:27‑29; 49:3‑27.

7Dt. 26:3; Lev. 9:22‑24; Num. 6:22‑27; 17:1‑18:7.

8Heb. 5:1, 4.

9Exodus 29; Leviticus 8.

10Ex. 28:12, 19; Lev. 4:3; 9:22‑24; Num. 6:22‑27; Heb. 5:1; 8:3.

111 Sam. 3:12‑14.

12For further discussion, see George Arthur Buttrick, gen. ed., The Interpreters

Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), vol. 3, s.v. Priests and Levites, by R.

Abba; suppl. vol., s.v. Priests, by B. A. Levine; James Orr, gen. ed., The International

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Hebrew prophecy provided another O.T. antecedent in the historical basis of

Christian preaching as a means of instruction and communication. Although the

premonarchy prophets (Abraham, Moses, and Joshua) were transitional figures and primarily

administrators, they did engage in the communication of divine truth to other persons.13 By

the time of the judges the early prophets began to emerge. This group included males and

females.14 There also is an account of a school of the prophets taught by Samuel.15 During

the period of the monarchy (both under the united and the divided kingdoms) prophets

continued to exercise their ministries.16 The ninth century B.C. saw the rise of the writing

prophets, beginning in the Southern kingdom and spreading to the Northern kingdom.17 The

writing prophets continued through the postexilic period.18 This long history of Hebrew

prophecy helped to prepare the way for Christian preaching.

The prophets ability to discern and to describe events was attributed to their belief

that God had divinely called them and placed his words in their mouths.19 Each divine call

was different. Nevertheless, each call was initiated by God, created tension in the individuals

lives, and preserved the personhood of the ones involved. The prophets call influenced the

direction and emphasis of his ministry and authenticated his message. The divine call

enabled the prophet to stay with the intended task when circumstances became undesirable

Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. 4, s.v. Priests,

by William G. Moorehead.

13Gen. 20:7; Dt. 18:15; 34:10; Joshua 23‑24.

14Ex. 15:20‑21; Jg. 4:4; 6:8‑10; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Chr. 35:18; Mic. 6:4.

151 Sam. 10:5‑10; 19:18‑20.

16For the united kingdom see 2 Sam. 7:2; 12:25; 15:27; 24:11; 1 Chr. 25:5. For the

Southern kingdom see 2 Chr. 9:29; 11:2‑4; 12:5‑15; 13:22; 15:1‑8; 16:7, 10; 19:2; 20:14‑17, 37;

24:17‑22; 25:5‑16; 1 Kg. 16:1‑12; 2 Kg. 14:1‑7. For the Northern kingdom see 2 Chr. 18:1‑

34; 1 Kg. 11:29; 13:1‑32 14:2‑18; 17‑19; 20:13‑28, 35‑43; 21; 22:1‑39; 2 Kings 1; 2‑9; 10; 13;

Mal. 4:5.

17For the Southern kingdom see Obadiah; Joel; Is. 6:8‑9; 61:1; Micah; Nahum;

Zephaniah; Jer. 1:6‑9; 7:28; 20:9; Habakkuk. For the Northern kingdom see Jonah, Amos,

and Hosea.

18For exilic prophets see Daniel and Ezek. 2:1‑7. For postexilic prophets see Haggai,

Zechariah, and Malachi.

19Gen. 12:1‑3; Ex. 3:1‑4:17; 1 Samuel 3; 1 Kg. 19:16, 19‑21; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1;

Ezek. 1:1‑3:15; Hos. 1:2; Jl. 1:1; Am. 7:14‑15; Jon. 1:1‑2; 3:1‑2; Mic. 1:1; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1;

Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Mal. 1:1. See also Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary

of the New Testament, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans,

1964‑76), vol. 2, s.v. evangelizomai, evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 708‑9.

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and adverse. His task primarily was one of forthtelling the word of the Lord to the people

of the day, although there were occasions of foretelling future events.20 The aspects of a

divine personal call and of the task of forthtellling the word of the Lord are O.T.

antecedents, which contributed to the historical basis of Christian preaching as a method of

communication and instruction.

Although the precise origin is not known, at some point in the latter period of the

prophets (the exile) the synagogue developed.21 This development influenced preaching

greatly in the years to come.22 The Israelites may have developed the synagogue system while

in exile in foreign lands and separated from the Temple in Jerusalem. When they returned to

Palestine after the exile they established synagogues in most of their communities.23 At first

the people met only for the exposition of the Law.24 Later, prayers and preaching were

added. The elders were responsible for the management of the synagogue. The rulers

(usually selected from the elders) controlled the services, decided who would read from the

Law and the Prophets and who would preach.25 One official, the servant, was responsible for

the maintenance of the synagogue and served as an elementary teacher. Those who prayed

and often read Scripture were known as delegates. Two almoners received the alms and

three almoners distributed the alms. An interpreter translated the passages of the Law and

20For further development in a popular style of the life and ministry of Hebrew

prophets see F. B. Huey, Jr., Yesterdays Prophets for Todays World (Nashville: Broadman

Press, 1980); see also Buttrick, vol. 3, Prophets, Prophetism, by B. D. Napier; Prophets in

the N.T., by M. H. Shepherd, Jr.; Prophetess, by B. D. Napier; suppl. vol., Prophecy in

Ancient Israel, by M. J. Buss; Prophecy in the Early Church, by E. E. Ellis; Prophecy,

False, by J. Crenshaw; Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper and Row,

1962); Orr, vol. 4, Prophecy, Prophets, by C. vonDrelli; R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the

Prophets (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953); Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel (Grand

Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979).

21It should be noted that most of the information concerning the synagogue comes

from interpolations from later sources. Much of what is known is speculation at best. See

Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans,

Green, and Co., 1892), 1:143; Azriel Eisenberg, The Synagogue through the Ages (New York:

Bloch Publ. Co., 1974); Joseph Gutmann, ed., The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology, and

Architecture (New York: KTAV Publ. House, 1975); Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the

Synagogue and the Church (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929).

22Dargan, 1:20; H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard, and Jesse J. Northcutt, Steps to

the Sermon (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 21.

23T. Harwood Pattison, The History of Christian Preaching (Philadelphia: American

Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 9.

24See Neh. 8:1‑8.

25Cf. 25Cf. Lk. 13:14; Acts 13:15.

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the Prophets, which were read in Hebrew, into Aramaic for the people.26 Ten persons were

required before worship could begin. The order of worship began with the recitation of the

Shema (Dt. 6:4‑9), preceded and followed with the congregational blessings. Prayers were

the next element, selected from a cycle of eighteen prayers or eulogies. A pericope from the

Law for that Sabbath was read, followed by a pericope from the Prophets.27 When the

sermon was added as a part of the worship service it was originally a method of dealing with

matters of conscience and the resolution of right and wrong by exposition of the Law (the

scribes). Later the sermon assumed a more devotional character. Anyone might be asked by

the ruler to preach. A benediction pronounced by a priest followed the sermon; the

congregation answered with amen.28

The development of the synagogue provided the early Christian preachers with a

people trained in hearing the exposition of Gods Word in a special place set apart for

sacred discourse. It also provided them with a place in many towns in which to preach.

The general structure of the synagogue building, the type of service, the use of Scripture for

divine instruction influenced Christian preaching for all time.29

New Testament Models

John the Baptist provided the biblical link between the preaching in the O.T. and the

N.T. He used preaching as a tool to communicate the immediate coming of the promised

reign of God30 and to call the people to a response of repentance.31 Our Lord himself chose

26Cf. 1 Cor. 14:28.

27The Pentateuch was divided into 154 pericopes, so that it was read through every

three years; the interpreter did not necessarily translate the readings from the Prophets verse

by verse, but in paragraphs of three verses.

28Orr, vol. 5, Synagogue, by Paul Levertoff, 2878; see also Buttrick, vol. 4,

Synagogue, by I. Sonne.

29Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 21‑22. However, N.T. scholarship has shown that

Dargan, as well as Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, may have overstated the influence of the

synagogue on Christian preaching; instead, evidence leads to a case for the strong influence

of the Cynic‑Stoic street preachers. For a treatment of the Cynic‑Stoic preaching see Ernst

Weber, De Dione Christostomo Cynicorum sectatore, Leipziger Studien, vol. 9 (Leipzig: University

Press, 1887); for a classic treatment of its influence on the N.T. preaching see Rudolf

Bultmann, Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynisch‑stoische Diatribe (Gottingen:

Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910); for a more recent and well‑argued treatment see Stanley

Kent Stowers, The Diatribe and Pauls Letter to the Romans, SBL Dissertation Series, vol. 57

(Missoula: Scholars Press, 1981). For several other significant influences see Wayne A.

Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

30Dargan, 1:21‑22.

31Mt. 3:1‑12; Mk. 1:4‑8; Lk. 3:1‑18; Jn. 1:6‑8, 15‑28.

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to use preaching as a primary means for communication and instruction.32 He commissioned

his disciples to preach and taught them to use preaching as an element in their ministries.33

Preaching was a vital factor in the worship and expansion of the early Church.34 The Book of

Acts opens with Peter using preaching a method for declaring the beginning of the new

age.35 Stephen employed preaching to proclaim the gospel.36 Phillip used preaching in

evangelism.37 Preaching was basic to Pauls ministry of missions.38 Each of these persons

found preaching to be a legitimate and helpful element in the execution of service to God.

The O.T. antecedents of the priestly office, prophetic ministry, and synagogue

worship, combined with the N.T. models of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the disciples, and

Paul, provide a historical basis of examples and tradition relative to a biblical foundation for

Christian preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The Behavioral Basis

In the O.T. commands to preach were directed primarily to individuals for the

purpose of fulfilling a specific unique task.39 However, the N.T. included commands to

preach which were directed to the disciples of Jesus as a group, to the Church as a whole,

and to all Christian preachers.40 These commands to preach were connected directly with

divine tasks to be accomplished. These tasks included world missions,41 personal

evangelism,42 and building up the Church.43 The command to preach often was related to

32Mt. 4:17, 23; 5:1‑7:28; 11:1, 5; Mk. 1:38‑39; 2:2; Lk. 4:16‑30, 42‑44; 5:1; 20:1; Eph.

2:17. See also Kittel, vol. 3, s.v. karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 706‑9.

33Mt. 10:5‑7, 26‑27; Mk. 3:14; 16:20.

34Acts 5:42; 6:2; 8:4, 25.

35Acts 2:14‑26; see also 3:12‑26; 10:42.

36Acts 7:1‑53.

37Acts 8:12, 40.

38Acts 9:19‑20; 13:5; 14:7‑18; 16:10; 17:2‑3, 16‑23; 20:7‑9; 28:30‑31; Rom. 1:15; 10:13‑

15; 1 Cor. 1:17, 23; 9:16; Gal. 1:15‑16; 1 Tim. 2:7.

39See Is. 6:8‑9; 61:1‑2; and Jon. 3:2.

40See Mt. 10:26‑27; 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2.

41Mt. 28:19‑20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46‑47.

42Rom. 10:13‑17; 1 Cor. 1:21.

43Eph. 4:11‑13.

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faithfulness in testifying about Gods work for man through Jesus.44 The preaching event

itself was a sign and reminder of the beginning of the last days.45 In the N.T. preaching was a

part of commands to obey, instructions to follow, and tasks to accomplish, providing a

biblical behavioral basis for Christian preaching as a method of communication and

instruction.

The Linguistic Basis

O.T. (Hebrew)

Approximately nineteen words occur in the O.T. which refer to preaching.46 No

formal definition is recorded in the O.T., but a study of several of the terms unveils some

characteristics of that which was called preaching. Several terms included the concepts of

preaching as a cry from a herald, a proclamation, and a burden.47 Other terms

connoted the ability to see, as in a vision (both in the spiritual and the temporal sense).48

These concepts formed the idea of one who had the abilities to see for the Lord and to

speak in his name in a bold but compassionate manner.49

N.T. (Greek)

Approximately twenty‑one words occur in the N.T. which refer to preaching.50 As

with the O.T., no formal definition of preaching is found in the N.T. However, again several

of the terms included the concepts of preaching as a cry from a herald, a proclamation,

an announcement.51 Other connotations included telling good news, calling with

44Acts 10:42.

45Acts 2:4, 17‑21.

46See William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament , trans. E.

Robinson, rev. C. Briggs, F. Brown, and S. Driver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Robert

Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible, 22d ed. (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, n.d.).

47See kara, keraz, keriah, koheleth, massa, rinnah.

48See chazah, chozeh.

49Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 21. See also Kittel, vol. 1, s.v. angelia, angello, an‑,

ap‑, di‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, by Julius Schneiwind, 71; vol. 2, s.v. evangelizomai,

evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, by Gerhard Friedrich, 707‑9, 714; vol. 6, s.v. prophatas,

prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia, prophatikos, pseudoprophatas, by Helmut Kramer et al., 796‑97,

810‑12.

50See Walter Bauer, A Greek‑English Lexicon of the New Testament, trans. W. F. Arndt

and F. W. Gingrich, 2d rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Young.

51See dialegomai, diangello, katangello, kerugma, kerusso, kerux.

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personal appeal, gossiping the gospel naturally, discoursing, teaching with authority,

and expounding publicly.52 Common to almost all of the N.T. terms was the aspect of

telling or declaring or proclaiming.53 These concepts reflected the idea of the preacher

as one who boldly and freely heralded the gospel.

The ideas of preaching in both the O.T. and N.T. involved heralding,

announcing, proclaiming in a bold fashion by the authority of God and for the intended

welfare of response from the hearers. These concepts provided a biblical linguistic basis for

Christian preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The Theological Basis

Christian Biblical Doctrine of God

The understanding of God in the Bible as personal and immanent is important to a

theological basis for preaching as a tool of communication. The Bible observed that just as it

is the nature of light to shine, so too it is the nature of God to reveal himself.54 The Bible

also presented God as having acted in history and spoken to his people.55 This enables one

to believe that God desires to be known (self‑revelation), has made himself known in the

past (via his actions and words), and will continue to make himself known in the present.

God created the universes and then spoke his blessing on it. God created a people for

himself and then spoke to them through the prophets. God created the Church and then

spoke to and through them via the early Christian preachers. Once we are persuaded that

God has spoken, however, then we too must speak. A compulsion rests upon us.56

Christian Biblical Doctrine of Christ

The portrayal of Christ as the Word of God substantiated the concept of Gods

willingness to communicate to his creation through self‑revelation.57 The biblical

understanding of Jesus Christ as fully divine and fully human provided a model for Gods

52See dialegomai, didasko, evangelizo, laleo, parakaleo, prophates, prophateuo, propheteia,

prophetikos.

53Kittel, vol. 1, s.v. angelia, angello, an‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, by Julius

Schneiwind, 56, 69; vol. 3, s.v. karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 703.

54Mt. 5:14‑16; 11:25‑26; Jn. 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:4‑6; 1 Jn. 1:5.

55Ps. 115:5; Is. 40:5; 55:11; Am. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:13.

56Stott, 96.

57Jn. 1:1‑3, 14; Heb. 1:1‑4.

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continuing to speak to his creation through humans via preaching.58 Christs incarnation

supplied a paradigm for preaching as both a human and a divine event.59

Christian Biblical Doctrine of the Church

The biblical material presents the nature of the Church as being directly related to

the present of God (or Gods Spirit). This is true even to the point of the Church being

referred to as the body of Christ.60 In the Churchs worship she speaks to God (prayer) and

listens for his words (meditation). The biblical teaching regarding the Churchs mission is to

call the world to God in Christ and to speak the words of God to the world. The biblical

method to accomplish this mission includes going, telling, proclaiming, explaining, and

exhorting.61

The Biblical Basis for the Message of Christian Preaching

In examining the biblical basis for preaching as one of the primary expressions of the

Christian faith, consideration must be given not only to its biblical basis as a method of

communication and instruction, but also to the biblical basis of its message.

O.T. Contributions

Little has been written concerning the contribution of the office of the priest to the

message of the Christian preacher.62 However, it seems reasonable to assert that the worship

implications of the priestly functions offer some parallels for the message of the Christian

preacher. His responsibility was two‑directional: (1) service to God, and

(2) service to the people. In representing God to the people and the people to God, the

priests functions involved an incarnational aspect. He communicated not only by what he

58Heb. 2:3‑4.

59See also Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: William

B. Eerdmans, 1961), 50‑54.

60Rom. 12:5.

61Mt. 28:19‑20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45‑47; Acts 10:42; Rom. 10:13‑17; 1 Cor. 1:21;

Eph. 4:11‑13; 2 Tim. 4:2. See also Stott, 109‑16.

62This may be due to the critical questions related to the origins, nature, and history

of the priesthood. See Aelred Cody, A History of the Old Testament Priesthood (Rome: Pontifical

Biblical Institute, 1969); Encyclopedia Judaica, 1971 ed., s.v. Priests and Priesthood; Donald

E. Gowan, Bridge between the Testaments (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976); George Buchanan

Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); A. S.

Herbert, Worship in Ancient Israel (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959); J. Morgenstern, A

Chapter in the History of the High Priesthood, American Journal of Semitic Languages and

Literature 55 (1939): 1‑24; Roland deVaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, trans. John

McHugh (New York: McGraw‑Hill Book Co., 1961).

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said but also by how he lived. The priest was to demonstrate personal forgiveness of sin, as

well as offer sacrifice publicly for its remission; he was to consecrate himself, as well as call

the people to holy living; he was to experience worship of God, as well as lead the people in

worship. The priest was to apply the admonitions of the holy writings to himself, as well as

use them as a source for instruction and direction for others. When the latter aspect of

incarnating the divine truth became deemphasized or forgotten, the priesthood fell into

disrepute.

In contrast to the lack of works dealing with the contributions of the office of the

priesthood, much has been written concerning the contributions of the prophets to the

message of the Christian preacher.63 An important element of the preaching of the O.T.

prophet was the idea that he had received a word or message from God, which had to be

faithfully passed on. The message did not have its source in the prophet himself but often

was introduced with the authority of thus saith the Lord. The prophet was responsible for

the correct delivery of the message he had received from God. The prophet did not just

proclaim judgment but also warned and admonished so that judgment could be averted. The

message was passed on in a relevant manner.64 Application usually was made to national,

ethical, and social issues.

The preaching which was a part of the experience of worship in the synagogue drew

from the sacred writings of the Law and the prophets and was explanatory in nature.65 The

priesthood, prophets, and synagogue worship provided a background for Christian

preaching which was concerned with peoples needs, incarnational in expression, divine in

origin and authority, explanatory in nature, and ethical in application.

New Testament Models

When we say that the main concern of the N.T. is with the act of proclamation, this

does not mean that the content is subsidiary. . . . Regard must be had to the content.66 The

content of John the Baptists preaching pointed to the Lamb of God, rather than to

himself as the messenger. His message was the same for all people. He called for decision,

63See Bernhard W. Anderson, The Eighth Century Prophets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,

1978); Andrew W. Blackwood, Sr., The Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1917);

Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); F. B. Huey, Jr.,

Yesterdays Prophets for Todays World (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980); J. Lindblom, Prophecy

in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962); R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets

(New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953); Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel (Grand Rapids:

Baker Book House, 1979).

64Kramer et al., prophetas, prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia, prophatikos, pseudoprophatas,

810‑12.

65See above., pp. 5‑6.

66Friedrich, karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, 710.

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choice, and fruitful repentance.67 His preaching was ethical, eschatological, and judgmental.

He was fearless in his attacks on the sins of the people.68

When Herod placed John the Baptist in prison, Jesus assumed Johns ministry and

preached as John did.69 The declaration was concerned with the Kingdom of God, living the

God‑intended life, acceptance by God, and the price and sacrifice involved in following

God. His themes were doctrinal and ethical, touching on the areas of domestic, social, and

civil life.70 However, Jesus did not speak of a prophet who was yet to come. He spoke as a

prophet of the fulfillment of expectation and promise. Rather than announcing that

something was going to take place, his announcement was the event itself. Unlike John,

Jesus was the burden of his own message. He himself was the content of his preaching.71

The content of the apostles preaching was parallel to Christs, with the addition of

the events concerning his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and promised return.72 The

major sources for the content of their preaching were the O.T. as interpreted to them by

Christ, the experiences they had had with Jesus, the historic events centering in Jesus, and

the individual understandings each gave to the entire picture.73 C. H. Dodd studied the

individual understandings reflected in the sermonic material of the apostles and preserved in

the N.T. He then sought to determine the common elements in each tradition in order to

discover the core content of the preaching of the early Church. Depending mostly on the

Petrine sermonic material, Dodd concluded that the kerygma of the early Church consisted

of (1) the age of fulfillment has dawned; (2) this has taken place through the ministry, death,

and resurrection of Jesus in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of

God and in fulfillment of O.T. prophecy; (3) by virtue of the resurrection Jesus has been

exalted at the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel; (4) the Holy Spirit in

the Church is the sign of Christs present power and glory; (5) the Messianic age will shortly

reach its consummation in the return of Christ; and (6) repent, receive the forgiveness of sin,

67Mt. 3:1‑14; Mk. 1:1‑9; Lk. 3:1‑20; Jn. 1:19‑36; 3:22‑36.

68Lloyd M. Perry and Warren W. Wiersbe, The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and

Preachers (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 12. See also Friedrich, evangelizomai, evangelion,

proevangelizomai, evangelistas, 719; Kramer et al., prophatas, prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia,

prophatikos, pseudoprophatas, 836‑41.

69See Mt. 4:17; cf. Mk. 1:14‑15.

70Perry Wiersbe, 12‑13.

71Friedrich, evangelizomai, evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, 712; Friedrich,

karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, 706‑8. See also Brown, Clinard, and

Northcutt, 22; Dargan, 1:22‑23.

72Ibid., 1:24.

73Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 22.

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the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of salvation, which is the life of the age to come

to those who enter the elect community.74

The kerygma reflected in Pauline sermonic material, according to Dodd, was

expressed as (1) the prophecies are fulfilled, and the new age is inaugurated by the coming of

Christ; (2) he was born of the seed of David; (3) he died according to the Scriptures, to

deliver us out of the present evil age; (4) he was buried; (5) he rose on the third day

according to the Scriptures; (6) he is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and

Lord of the quick and the dead; (7) he will come again as Judge and Savior of men.

Three major elements in the Pauline kerygma which were not in the Petrine kerygma

were (1) Jesus is the Son of God; (2) Christ died for our sins; (3) the exalted Christ intercedes

for us. The other points were common to both; there was little in the Petrine kerygma,

which did not reappear substantially in the Pauline kerygma.75

By isolating elements of the kerygma of the early Church according to different

traditions, Dodd performed a great service for N.T. scholarship and Christian preaching.

However, his assertion that there was a sharp separation between kerygma and didache

in the preaching of the N.T. did not go unchallenged.76 By its very nature, declaring the

unique historical reality of Christ involves teaching and admonishing; however, it is

teaching which participates in the eschatological and dramatic character of the message.77

Although kerygma and didache are distinct from each other, they are not necessarily

inseparable in the preaching of the early Church. Robert Mounce described the two

preaching elements as connected through a vital dependent relationship. He visualized the

N.T. materials as forming three concentric circles around he death, burial, resurrection, and

exaltation of Christ.78 The first circle was the kerygma, which interpreted the Christ events

for an evangelistic purpose. The second circle was the theological expansion of the first

circle. Its goal was to guide the new Christian into a fuller understanding of what God had

done through Jesus Christ. The outside circle was the didache, the ethical expansion of the

74C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (Grand Rapids: Baker Book

House, 1936), 21‑24.

75Ibid., 17, 25‑27.

76See Francis J. Handy, Jesus the Preacher (New York: Abingdon‑Cokesbury Press,

1949), 11‑17; Michel Philibert, Christs Preachingand Ours, trans. David Lewis (Richmond:

John Knox Press, 1963); Robert C. Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church

(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967).

77Schneiwind, angelia, angello, an‑, di‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, 72.

78Robert H. Mounce, The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching (Grand Rapids:

William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 133.

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inner two circles. It dealt with the new relationship of man to God and was concerned with

focusing on practical daily living.79

Conclusion

No agency in religion is older than preaching. Perry and Wiersbe continued the

opening of their study by asserting, If we would understand preaching today, we must

examine its heritage.80 In examining the heritage of this ancient agency, this paper has been

concerned with whether or not Christian preaching has a biblical basis for its concept and

content.

An examination of the history, commands, instructions, behavior, language, and

theology in the Bible provided evidence for the concept of Christian preaching. The

evidence supplied by the office of the priest and the synagogue was the weakest evidence for

the concept of Christian preaching. The evidence drawn from the prophets, disciples, early

Church, and Jesus himself was the strongest element in support of the concept of Christian

preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The biblical basis for the content of Christian preaching came to full maturity in the

N.T. models of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. The content of the sermonic

material of the N.T. was sometimes Christocentric, sometimes ethical, sometimes

eschatological, sometimes kerygmatic, and sometimes existential. It was devoted to the

person and work of Christ, the coming of the new age, mankinds response to the initiative

of God, and the implications of Gods work in Christ when applied to ones relationship to

fellow humans. Jesus, his apostles, and the sermonic material of the early Church generally

shared a common kerygmatic content. These elements, combined with the preparatory

contributions of the preaching content of the O.T., provided a strong biblical basis for the

kerygmatic and didactic message of Christian preaching.81

79Ibid.

80Perry and Wiersbe, 11.

8181See Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 22‑23

http://baptistcenter.com/fall\_09\_preaching.pdf

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The Biblical Basis for Christian Preaching - Dr. Dennis Phelps

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Introduction

That is the basis for preaching as one of the primary expressions of the Christian

faith both inside and outside of the Church? Is preaching only a cultural aspect

leftover from the earliest days of the struggling, persecuted Church, or is there a legitimate

and biblical basis for the Church to continue to utilize preaching as an expression of her

faith?

The thesis of this paper is that a biblical basis exists for Christian preaching. This

thesis will be defended by utilizing a bifocal approach in examining the above questions. The

first (and major) part will focus on the biblical basis of Christian preaching as a method of

communication and instruction. The second part will focus on the biblical basis of the

content of Christian preaching.

Phillips Brookss concept of preaching as the communication of divine truth through

human personality to other persons will be the operative definition used throughout this

paper.1 The traditional Protestant canon will serve as the primary source. The method

employed will be a survey of the biblical materials in the canon related to preaching. Use of

both the Old Testament (O.T.) and New Testament (N.T.) reflects two of the three sources

for the development of Christian preaching, Hebrew religion and the Christian gospel (the

third source being ancient oratory).2 The Bibles authority for guidance in matters of faith

and practice is presupposed. A secondary purpose of this paper is to provide a biblical basis

and introduction to a study of the history of Christian preaching across the centuries.

John R. W. Stott began the opening chapter of Between Two Worlds with the

assertion, Preaching is indispensable to Christianity. Without preaching a necessary part of

its [Christianitys] authenticity has been lost.3 Assuming this intimacy does indeed exist, what

1Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 5‑8,

14‑28.

2See Edwin Charles Dargan, A History of Preaching (New York: Hodder and

Stoughton, 1905), 1:14.

3John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982),

15.

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is the foundation? This section explores four biblical bases for the intimacy between

Christianity and preaching as a method of Christian communication and instruction.

The Historical Basis

O.T. Antecedents

In the Genesis record God is described as speaking creation into existence.4 Shortly

after mankinds creation he is entrusted with the responsibility of using words to name the

reality surrounding him, including all animal life.5 One does not progress very farr into the

Protestant canon before being confronted with the biblical writers understanding of words

communicating power, whether spoken by God or persons.

The office of the priest supplied another O.T. antecedent for Christian preaching.

The priestly acts of Enoch, Noah, Isaac, and Jacob included speaking words of counsel from

the Lord.6 By the time of Moses and Aaron the office of priest had become formally

established.7 The nature of the office implied a divine choice8 and consecration.9 It was a

religious order, not a political one. Priestism was denied through the action of the people in

laying their hands on the heads of their sacrifices and freely confessing their sins to God

alone. Their consciences were free and unhindered. The office of the priest represented life,

not death. Its function implied representing all the people, offering sacrifices, and

interceding on the peoples behalf.10 However, the office of priest fell into suspicion,

laziness, and immorality. The sense of a divine call began to be lost.11 One only can speculate

that if the priests had remained faithful to their tasks and retained a higher sense of divine

calling the need may have diminished for as many prophets which later arose in Israel to

proclaim Gods message. However, the priests responsibility to speak words of counsel

from God contributed to the historical tradition inherited by the Church in using preaching

as a means of instruction and communication.12

4Gen. 1:3‑27.

5Gen. 2:19‑20.

6Jude 14; 2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 27:27‑29; 49:3‑27.

7Dt. 26:3; Lev. 9:22‑24; Num. 6:22‑27; 17:1‑18:7.

8Heb. 5:1, 4.

9Exodus 29; Leviticus 8.

10Ex. 28:12, 19; Lev. 4:3; 9:22‑24; Num. 6:22‑27; Heb. 5:1; 8:3.

111 Sam. 3:12‑14.

12For further discussion, see George Arthur Buttrick, gen. ed., The Interpreters

Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), vol. 3, s.v. Priests and Levites, by R.

Abba; suppl. vol., s.v. Priests, by B. A. Levine; James Orr, gen. ed., The International

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Hebrew prophecy provided another O.T. antecedent in the historical basis of

Christian preaching as a means of instruction and communication. Although the

premonarchy prophets (Abraham, Moses, and Joshua) were transitional figures and primarily

administrators, they did engage in the communication of divine truth to other persons.13 By

the time of the judges the early prophets began to emerge. This group included males and

females.14 There also is an account of a school of the prophets taught by Samuel.15 During

the period of the monarchy (both under the united and the divided kingdoms) prophets

continued to exercise their ministries.16 The ninth century B.C. saw the rise of the writing

prophets, beginning in the Southern kingdom and spreading to the Northern kingdom.17 The

writing prophets continued through the postexilic period.18 This long history of Hebrew

prophecy helped to prepare the way for Christian preaching.

The prophets ability to discern and to describe events was attributed to their belief

that God had divinely called them and placed his words in their mouths.19 Each divine call

was different. Nevertheless, each call was initiated by God, created tension in the individuals

lives, and preserved the personhood of the ones involved. The prophets call influenced the

direction and emphasis of his ministry and authenticated his message. The divine call

enabled the prophet to stay with the intended task when circumstances became undesirable

Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. 4, s.v. Priests,

by William G. Moorehead.

13Gen. 20:7; Dt. 18:15; 34:10; Joshua 23‑24.

14Ex. 15:20‑21; Jg. 4:4; 6:8‑10; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Chr. 35:18; Mic. 6:4.

151 Sam. 10:5‑10; 19:18‑20.

16For the united kingdom see 2 Sam. 7:2; 12:25; 15:27; 24:11; 1 Chr. 25:5. For the

Southern kingdom see 2 Chr. 9:29; 11:2‑4; 12:5‑15; 13:22; 15:1‑8; 16:7, 10; 19:2; 20:14‑17, 37;

24:17‑22; 25:5‑16; 1 Kg. 16:1‑12; 2 Kg. 14:1‑7. For the Northern kingdom see 2 Chr. 18:1‑

34; 1 Kg. 11:29; 13:1‑32 14:2‑18; 17‑19; 20:13‑28, 35‑43; 21; 22:1‑39; 2 Kings 1; 2‑9; 10; 13;

Mal. 4:5.

17For the Southern kingdom see Obadiah; Joel; Is. 6:8‑9; 61:1; Micah; Nahum;

Zephaniah; Jer. 1:6‑9; 7:28; 20:9; Habakkuk. For the Northern kingdom see Jonah, Amos,

and Hosea.

18For exilic prophets see Daniel and Ezek. 2:1‑7. For postexilic prophets see Haggai,

Zechariah, and Malachi.

19Gen. 12:1‑3; Ex. 3:1‑4:17; 1 Samuel 3; 1 Kg. 19:16, 19‑21; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1;

Ezek. 1:1‑3:15; Hos. 1:2; Jl. 1:1; Am. 7:14‑15; Jon. 1:1‑2; 3:1‑2; Mic. 1:1; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1;

Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Mal. 1:1. See also Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary

of the New Testament, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans,

1964‑76), vol. 2, s.v. evangelizomai, evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 708‑9.

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and adverse. His task primarily was one of forthtelling the word of the Lord to the people

of the day, although there were occasions of foretelling future events.20 The aspects of a

divine personal call and of the task of forthtellling the word of the Lord are O.T.

antecedents, which contributed to the historical basis of Christian preaching as a method of

communication and instruction.

Although the precise origin is not known, at some point in the latter period of the

prophets (the exile) the synagogue developed.21 This development influenced preaching

greatly in the years to come.22 The Israelites may have developed the synagogue system while

in exile in foreign lands and separated from the Temple in Jerusalem. When they returned to

Palestine after the exile they established synagogues in most of their communities.23 At first

the people met only for the exposition of the Law.24 Later, prayers and preaching were

added. The elders were responsible for the management of the synagogue. The rulers

(usually selected from the elders) controlled the services, decided who would read from the

Law and the Prophets and who would preach.25 One official, the servant, was responsible for

the maintenance of the synagogue and served as an elementary teacher. Those who prayed

and often read Scripture were known as delegates. Two almoners received the alms and

three almoners distributed the alms. An interpreter translated the passages of the Law and

20For further development in a popular style of the life and ministry of Hebrew

prophets see F. B. Huey, Jr., Yesterdays Prophets for Todays World (Nashville: Broadman

Press, 1980); see also Buttrick, vol. 3, Prophets, Prophetism, by B. D. Napier; Prophets in

the N.T., by M. H. Shepherd, Jr.; Prophetess, by B. D. Napier; suppl. vol., Prophecy in

Ancient Israel, by M. J. Buss; Prophecy in the Early Church, by E. E. Ellis; Prophecy,

False, by J. Crenshaw; Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper and Row,

1962); Orr, vol. 4, Prophecy, Prophets, by C. vonDrelli; R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the

Prophets (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953); Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel (Grand

Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979).

21It should be noted that most of the information concerning the synagogue comes

from interpolations from later sources. Much of what is known is speculation at best. See

Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans,

Green, and Co., 1892), 1:143; Azriel Eisenberg, The Synagogue through the Ages (New York:

Bloch Publ. Co., 1974); Joseph Gutmann, ed., The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology, and

Architecture (New York: KTAV Publ. House, 1975); Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the

Synagogue and the Church (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929).

22Dargan, 1:20; H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard, and Jesse J. Northcutt, Steps to

the Sermon (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 21.

23T. Harwood Pattison, The History of Christian Preaching (Philadelphia: American

Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 9.

24See Neh. 8:1‑8.

25Cf. Lk. 13:14; Acts 13:15.

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the Prophets, which were read in Hebrew, into Aramaic for the people.26 Ten persons were

required before worship could begin. The order of worship began with the recitation of the

Shema (Dt. 6:4‑9), preceded and followed with the congregational blessings. Prayers were

the next element, selected from a cycle of eighteen prayers or eulogies. A pericope from the

Law for that Sabbath was read, followed by a pericope from the Prophets.27 When the

sermon was added as a part of the worship service it was originally a method of dealing with

matters of conscience and the resolution of right and wrong by exposition of the Law (the

scribes). Later the sermon assumed a more devotional character. Anyone might be asked by

the ruler to preach. A benediction pronounced by a priest followed the sermon; the

congregation answered with amen.28

The development of the synagogue provided the early Christian preachers with a

people trained in hearing the exposition of Gods Word in a special place set apart for

sacred discourse. It also provided them with a place in many towns in which to preach.

The general structure of the synagogue building, the type of service, the use of Scripture for

divine instruction influenced Christian preaching for all time.29

New Testament Models

John the Baptist provided the biblical link between the preaching in the O.T. and the

N.T. He used preaching as a tool to communicate the immediate coming of the promised

reign of God30 and to call the people to a response of repentance.31 Our Lord himself chose

26Cf. 1 Cor. 14:28.

27The Pentateuch was divided into 154 pericopes, so that it was read through every

three years; the interpreter did not necessarily translate the readings from the Prophets verse

by verse, but in paragraphs of three verses.

28Orr, vol. 5, Synagogue, by Paul Levertoff, 2878; see also Buttrick, vol. 4,

Synagogue, by I. Sonne.

29Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 21‑22. However, N.T. scholarship has shown that

Dargan, as well as Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, may have overstated the influence of the

synagogue on Christian preaching; instead, evidence leads to a case for the strong influence

of the Cynic‑Stoic street preachers. For a treatment of the Cynic‑Stoic preaching see Ernst

Weber, De Dione Christostomo Cynicorum sectatore, Leipziger Studien, vol. 9 (Leipzig: University

Press, 1887); for a classic treatment of its influence on the N.T. preaching see Rudolf

Bultmann, Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynisch‑stoische Diatribe (Gottingen:

Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910); for a more recent and well‑argued treatment see Stanley

Kent Stowers, The Diatribe and Pauls Letter to the Romans, SBL Dissertation Series, vol. 57

(Missoula: Scholars Press, 1981). For several other significant influences see Wayne A.

Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

30Dargan, 1:21‑22.

31Mt. 3:1‑12; Mk. 1:4‑8; Lk. 3:1‑18; Jn. 1:6‑8, 15‑28.

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to use preaching as a primary means for communication and instruction.32 He commissioned

his disciples to preach and taught them to use preaching as an element in their ministries.33

Preaching was a vital factor in the worship and expansion of the early Church.34 The Book of

Acts opens with Peter using preaching a method for declaring the beginning of the new

age.35 Stephen employed preaching to proclaim the gospel.36 Phillip used preaching in

evangelism.37 Preaching was basic to Pauls ministry of missions.38 Each of these persons

found preaching to be a legitimate and helpful element in the execution of service to God.

The O.T. antecedents of the priestly office, prophetic ministry, and synagogue

worship, combined with the N.T. models of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the disciples, and

Paul, provide a historical basis of examples and tradition relative to a biblical foundation for

Christian preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The Behavioral Basis

In the O.T. commands to preach were directed primarily to individuals for the

purpose of fulfilling a specific unique task.39 However, the N.T. included commands to

preach which were directed to the disciples of Jesus as a group, to the Church as a whole,

and to all Christian preachers.40 These commands to preach were connected directly with

divine tasks to be accomplished. These tasks included world missions,41 personal

evangelism,42 and building up the Church.43 The command to preach often was related to

32Mt. 4:17, 23; 5:1‑7:28; 11:1, 5; Mk. 1:38‑39; 2:2; Lk. 4:16‑30, 42‑44; 5:1; 20:1; Eph.

2:17. See also Kittel, vol. 3, s.v. karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 706‑9.

33Mt. 10:5‑7, 26‑27; Mk. 3:14; 16:20.

34Acts 5:42; 6:2; 8:4, 25.

35Acts 2:14‑26; see also 3:12‑26; 10:42.

36Acts 7:1‑53.

37Acts 8:12, 40.

38Acts 9:19‑20; 13:5; 14:7‑18; 16:10; 17:2‑3, 16‑23; 20:7‑9; 28:30‑31; Rom. 1:15; 10:13‑

15; 1 Cor. 1:17, 23; 9:16; Gal. 1:15‑16; 1 Tim. 2:7.

39See Is. 6:8‑9; 61:1‑2; and Jon. 3:2.

40See Mt. 10:26‑27; 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2.

41Mt. 28:19‑20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46‑47.

42Rom. 10:13‑17; 1 Cor. 1:21.

43Eph. 4:11‑13.

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faithfulness in testifying about Gods work for man through Jesus.44 The preaching event

itself was a sign and reminder of the beginning of the last days.45 In the N.T. preaching was a

part of commands to obey, instructions to follow, and tasks to accomplish, providing a

biblical behavioral basis for Christian preaching as a method of communication and

instruction.

The Linguistic Basis

O.T. (Hebrew)

Approximately nineteen words occur in the O.T. which refer to preaching.46 No

formal definition is recorded in the O.T., but a study of several of the terms unveils some

characteristics of that which was called preaching. Several terms included the concepts of

preaching as a cry from a herald, a proclamation, and a burden.47 Other terms

connoted the ability to see, as in a vision (both in the spiritual and the temporal sense).48

These concepts formed the idea of one who had the abilities to see for the Lord and to

speak in his name in a bold but compassionate manner.49

N.T. (Greek)

Approximately twenty‑one words occur in the N.T. which refer to preaching.50 As

with the O.T., no formal definition of preaching is found in the N.T. However, again several

of the terms included the concepts of preaching as a cry from a herald, a proclamation,

an announcement.51 Other connotations included telling good news, calling with

44Acts 10:42.

45Acts 2:4, 17‑21.

46See William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament , trans. E.

Robinson, rev. C. Briggs, F. Brown, and S. Driver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Robert

Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible, 22d ed. (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, n.d.).

47See kara, keraz, keriah, koheleth, massa, rinnah.

48See chazah, chozeh.

49Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 21. See also Kittel, vol. 1, s.v. angelia, angello, an‑,

ap‑, di‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, by Julius Schneiwind, 71; vol. 2, s.v. evangelizomai,

evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, by Gerhard Friedrich, 707‑9, 714; vol. 6, s.v. prophatas,

prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia, prophatikos, pseudoprophatas, by Helmut Kramer et al., 796‑97,

810‑12.

50See Walter Bauer, A Greek‑English Lexicon of the New Testament, trans. W. F. Arndt

and F. W. Gingrich, 2d rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Young.

51See dialegomai, diangello, katangello, kerugma, kerusso, kerux.

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personal appeal, gossiping the gospel naturally, discoursing, teaching with authority,

and expounding publicly.52 Common to almost all of the N.T. terms was the aspect of

telling or declaring or proclaiming.53 These concepts reflected the idea of the preacher

as one who boldly and freely heralded the gospel.

The ideas of preaching in both the O.T. and N.T. involved heralding,

announcing, proclaiming in a bold fashion by the authority of God and for the intended

welfare of response from the hearers. These concepts provided a biblical linguistic basis for

Christian preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The Theological Basis

Christian Biblical Doctrine of God

The understanding of God in the Bible as personal and immanent is important to a

theological basis for preaching as a tool of communication. The Bible observed that just as it

is the nature of light to shine, so too it is the nature of God to reveal himself.54 The Bible

also presented God as having acted in history and spoken to his people.55 This enables one

to believe that God desires to be known (self‑revelation), has made himself known in the

past (via his actions and words), and will continue to make himself known in the present.

God created the universes and then spoke his blessing on it. God created a people for

himself and then spoke to them through the prophets. God created the Church and then

spoke to and through them via the early Christian preachers. Once we are persuaded that

God has spoken, however, then we too must speak. A compulsion rests upon us.56

Christian Biblical Doctrine of Christ

The portrayal of Christ as the Word of God substantiated the concept of Gods

willingness to communicate to his creation through self‑revelation.57 The biblical

understanding of Jesus Christ as fully divine and fully human provided a model for Gods

52See dialegomai, didasko, evangelizo, laleo, parakaleo, prophates, prophateuo, propheteia,

prophetikos.

53Kittel, vol. 1, s.v. angelia, angello, an‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, by Julius

Schneiwind, 56, 69; vol. 3, s.v. karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, by Gerhard

Friedrich, 703.

54Mt. 5:14‑16; 11:25‑26; Jn. 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:4‑6; 1 Jn. 1:5.

55Ps. 115:5; Is. 40:5; 55:11; Am. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:13.

56Stott, 96.

57Jn. 1:1‑3, 14; Heb. 1:1‑4.

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continuing to speak to his creation through humans via preaching.58 Christs incarnation

supplied a paradigm for preaching as both a human and a divine event.59

Christian Biblical Doctrine of the Church

The biblical material presents the nature of the Church as being directly related to

the present of God (or Gods Spirit). This is true even to the point of the Church being

referred to as the body of Christ.60 In the Churchs worship she speaks to God (prayer) and

listens for his words (meditation). The biblical teaching regarding the Churchs mission is to

call the world to God in Christ and to speak the words of God to the world. The biblical

method to accomplish this mission includes going, telling, proclaiming, explaining, and

exhorting.61

The Biblical Basis for the Message of Christian Preaching

In examining the biblical basis for preaching as one of the primary expressions of the

Christian faith, consideration must be given not only to its biblical basis as a method of

communication and instruction, but also to the biblical basis of its message.

O.T. Contributions

Little has been written concerning the contribution of the office of the priest to the

message of the Christian preacher.62 However, it seems reasonable to assert that the worship

implications of the priestly functions offer some parallels for the message of the Christian

preacher. His responsibility was two‑directional: (1) service to God, and

(2) service to the people. In representing God to the people and the people to God, the

priests functions involved an incarnational aspect. He communicated not only by what he

58Heb. 2:3‑4.

59See also Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: William

B. Eerdmans, 1961), 50‑54.

60Rom. 12:5.

61Mt. 28:19‑20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45‑47; Acts 10:42; Rom. 10:13‑17; 1 Cor. 1:21;

Eph. 4:11‑13; 2 Tim. 4:2. See also Stott, 109‑16.

62This may be due to the critical questions related to the origins, nature, and history

of the priesthood. See Aelred Cody, A History of the Old Testament Priesthood (Rome: Pontifical

Biblical Institute, 1969); Encyclopedia Judaica, 1971 ed., s.v. Priests and Priesthood; Donald

E. Gowan, Bridge between the Testaments (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976); George Buchanan

Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); A. S.

Herbert, Worship in Ancient Israel (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959); J. Morgenstern, A

Chapter in the History of the High Priesthood, American Journal of Semitic Languages and

Literature 55 (1939): 1‑24; Roland deVaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, trans. John

McHugh (New York: McGraw‑Hill Book Co., 1961).

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said but also by how he lived. The priest was to demonstrate personal forgiveness of sin, as

well as offer sacrifice publicly for its remission; he was to consecrate himself, as well as call

the people to holy living; he was to experience worship of God, as well as lead the people in

worship. The priest was to apply the admonitions of the holy writings to himself, as well as

use them as a source for instruction and direction for others. When the latter aspect of

incarnating the divine truth became deemphasized or forgotten, the priesthood fell into

disrepute.

In contrast to the lack of works dealing with the contributions of the office of the

priesthood, much has been written concerning the contributions of the prophets to the

message of the Christian preacher.63 An important element of the preaching of the O.T.

prophet was the idea that he had received a word or message from God, which had to be

faithfully passed on. The message did not have its source in the prophet himself but often

was introduced with the authority of thus saith the Lord. The prophet was responsible for

the correct delivery of the message he had received from God. The prophet did not just

proclaim judgment but also warned and admonished so that judgment could be averted. The

message was passed on in a relevant manner.64 Application usually was made to national,

ethical, and social issues.

The preaching which was a part of the experience of worship in the synagogue drew

from the sacred writings of the Law and the prophets and was explanatory in nature.65 The

priesthood, prophets, and synagogue worship provided a background for Christian

preaching which was concerned with peoples needs, incarnational in expression, divine in

origin and authority, explanatory in nature, and ethical in application.

New Testament Models

When we say that the main concern of the N.T. is with the act of proclamation, this

does not mean that the content is subsidiary. . . . Regard must be had to the content.66 The

content of John the Baptists preaching pointed to the Lamb of God, rather than to

himself as the messenger. His message was the same for all people. He called for decision,

63See Bernhard W. Anderson, The Eighth Century Prophets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,

1978); Andrew W. Blackwood, Sr., The Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1917);

Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); F. B. Huey, Jr.,

Yesterdays Prophets for Todays World (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980); J. Lindblom, Prophecy

in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962); R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets

(New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953); Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel (Grand Rapids:

Baker Book House, 1979).

64Kramer et al., prophetas, prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia, prophatikos, pseudoprophatas,

810‑12.

65See above., pp. 5‑6.

66Friedrich, karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, 710.

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choice, and fruitful repentance.67 His preaching was ethical, eschatological, and judgmental.

He was fearless in his attacks on the sins of the people.68

When Herod placed John the Baptist in prison, Jesus assumed Johns ministry and

preached as John did.69 The declaration was concerned with the Kingdom of God, living the

God‑intended life, acceptance by God, and the price and sacrifice involved in following

God. His themes were doctrinal and ethical, touching on the areas of domestic, social, and

civil life.70 However, Jesus did not speak of a prophet who was yet to come. He spoke as a

prophet of the fulfillment of expectation and promise. Rather than announcing that

something was going to take place, his announcement was the event itself. Unlike John,

Jesus was the burden of his own message. He himself was the content of his preaching.71

The content of the apostles preaching was parallel to Christs, with the addition of

the events concerning his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and promised return.72 The

major sources for the content of their preaching were the O.T. as interpreted to them by

Christ, the experiences they had had with Jesus, the historic events centering in Jesus, and

the individual understandings each gave to the entire picture.73 C. H. Dodd studied the

individual understandings reflected in the sermonic material of the apostles and preserved in

the N.T. He then sought to determine the common elements in each tradition in order to

discover the core content of the preaching of the early Church. Depending mostly on the

Petrine sermonic material, Dodd concluded that the kerygma of the early Church consisted

of (1) the age of fulfillment has dawned; (2) this has taken place through the ministry, death,

and resurrection of Jesus in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of

God and in fulfillment of O.T. prophecy; (3) by virtue of the resurrection Jesus has been

exalted at the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel; (4) the Holy Spirit in

the Church is the sign of Christs present power and glory; (5) the Messianic age will shortly

reach its consummation in the return of Christ; and (6) repent, receive the forgiveness of sin,

67Mt. 3:1‑14; Mk. 1:1‑9; Lk. 3:1‑20; Jn. 1:19‑36; 3:22‑36.

68Lloyd M. Perry and Warren W. Wiersbe, The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and

Preachers (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 12. See also Friedrich, evangelizomai, evangelion,

proevangelizomai, evangelistas, 719; Kramer et al., prophatas, prophatis, prophateuo, prophateia,

prophatikos, pseudoprophatas, 836‑41.

69See Mt. 4:17; cf. Mk. 1:14‑15.

70Perry Wiersbe, 12‑13.

71Friedrich, evangelizomai, evangelion, proevangelizomai, evangelistas, 712; Friedrich,

karux (hierokarux), karusso, kerugma, prokarusso, 706‑8. See also Brown, Clinard, and

Northcutt, 22; Dargan, 1:22‑23.

72Ibid., 1:24.

73Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 22.

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the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of salvation, which is the life of the age to come

to those who enter the elect community.74

The kerygma reflected in Pauline sermonic material, according to Dodd, was

expressed as (1) the prophecies are fulfilled, and the new age is inaugurated by the coming of

Christ; (2) he was born of the seed of David; (3) he died according to the Scriptures, to

deliver us out of the present evil age; (4) he was buried; (5) he rose on the third day

according to the Scriptures; (6) he is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and

Lord of the quick and the dead; (7) he will come again as Judge and Savior of men.

Three major elements in the Pauline kerygma which were not in the Petrine kerygma

were (1) Jesus is the Son of God; (2) Christ died for our sins; (3) the exalted Christ intercedes

for us. The other points were common to both; there was little in the Petrine kerygma,

which did not reappear substantially in the Pauline kerygma.75

By isolating elements of the kerygma of the early Church according to different

traditions, Dodd performed a great service for N.T. scholarship and Christian preaching.

However, his assertion that there was a sharp separation between kerygma and didache

in the preaching of the N.T. did not go unchallenged.76 By its very nature, declaring the

unique historical reality of Christ involves teaching and admonishing; however, it is

teaching which participates in the eschatological and dramatic character of the message.77

Although kerygma and didache are distinct from each other, they are not necessarily

inseparable in the preaching of the early Church. Robert Mounce described the two

preaching elements as connected through a vital dependent relationship. He visualized the

N.T. materials as forming three concentric circles around he death, burial, resurrection, and

exaltation of Christ.78 The first circle was the kerygma, which interpreted the Christ events

for an evangelistic purpose. The second circle was the theological expansion of the first

circle. Its goal was to guide the new Christian into a fuller understanding of what God had

done through Jesus Christ. The outside circle was the didache, the ethical expansion of the

74C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (Grand Rapids: Baker Book

House, 1936), 21‑24.

75Ibid., 17, 25‑27.

76See Francis J. Handy, Jesus the Preacher (New York: Abingdon‑Cokesbury Press,

1949), 11‑17; Michel Philibert, Christs Preachingand Ours, trans. David Lewis (Richmond:

John Knox Press, 1963); Robert C. Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church

(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967).

77Schneiwind, angelia, angello, an‑, di‑, ex‑, kat‑, prokatangello, katangeleus, 72.

78Robert H. Mounce, The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching (Grand Rapids:

William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 133.

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inner two circles. It dealt with the new relationship of man to God and was concerned with

focusing on practical daily living.79

Conclusion

No agency in religion is older than preaching. Perry and Wiersbe continued the

opening of their study by asserting, If we would understand preaching today, we must

examine its heritage.80 In examining the heritage of this ancient agency, this paper has been

concerned with whether or not Christian preaching has a biblical basis for its concept and

content.

An examination of the history, commands, instructions, behavior, language, and

theology in the Bible provided evidence for the concept of Christian preaching. The

evidence supplied by the office of the priest and the synagogue was the weakest evidence for

the concept of Christian preaching. The evidence drawn from the prophets, disciples, early

Church, and Jesus himself was the strongest element in support of the concept of Christian

preaching as a method of communication and instruction.

The biblical basis for the content of Christian preaching came to full maturity in the

N.T. models of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. The content of the sermonic

material of the N.T. was sometimes Christocentric, sometimes ethical, sometimes

eschatological, sometimes kerygmatic, and sometimes existential. It was devoted to the

person and work of Christ, the coming of the new age, mankinds response to the initiative

of God, and the implications of Gods work in Christ when applied to ones relationship to

fellow humans. Jesus, his apostles, and the sermonic material of the early Church generally

shared a common kerygmatic content. These elements, combined with the preparatory

contributions of the preaching content of the O.T., provided a strong biblical basis for the

kerygmatic and didactic message of Christian preaching.81

79Ibid.

80Perry and Wiersbe, 11.

8181See Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt, 22‑23.

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Expository Preaching and the Mission of the Church Dr. David Allen

Expository Preaching and

the Mission of the Church

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Baptist Theological Seminary at the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry Mission of

Todays Church Conference in March, 2005.

Introduction

do not believe it is over the top to say that there is a crisis in preaching not only in

the Evangelical world but also in large swaths of the Southern Baptist world. In the

SBC, we talk about expository preaching; often we do not practice it.

I received a phone call from a man in Texas. He asked me if I had a student who

either was close to graduating or maybe graduated recently whom I could recommend to

him who would consider planting a new church. His one condition was that the new pastor

must be an expositional preacher. Though I suspected what his answer would be, I queried

him further about his request. He had been to every Southern Baptist church within a threecounty

contiguous area, and had visited many churches more than once, looking for a

church where the pastor preached expository sermons. He further stated that he had been to

lots of evangelical churches, not just Baptist churches, and could not find a single one where

the pastor preached expositionally. He went on to describe a litany of ridiculous sermons

he had heard of the five ways to be happy and three ways to love your mother variety.

He concluded: My wife and I are 63 years old and recently retired. We are prepared

financially to stand behind a new work if we can have a pastor who would preach

expositionally.

This situation is not atypical. I routinely hear it in varied permutations.

In many churches, pop culture, personal experience, packaged pragmatism, and pop

psychology have displaced the Bible. Add to this the urge today to be creative in

preaching. Now I am not opposed to creativity, and I hope you are not either. However,

creativity is something of a code word today in some church circles for anti‑expository

preaching, or at the very least creativity is appealed to justify why some do not practice

exposition regularly. I am all for creativity, but when creativity subverts or overrides the

communication of biblical content, we have a real problem. Preaching magazine is one of the

professional journals for preachers. In the January/February 2005 edition, there is a lead

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p25

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article entitled Preaching Creatively: An Interview with Ed Young Jr. pastor of Fellowship

Church in Grapevine, Texas. Young tells us we must be creative in preaching because God

desires it. I do not want to be overly critical, but I am not at all sure God desires that we

be creative. That seems to be extra biblical to me. That said, however, I do think we should

be creative in our preaching. The interviewer asked Young this question: Some critics might

believe that with all the emphasis on creativity it would be possible to give less priority to the

Bible and preaching. Tell me about your use of Scripture in your messages. Youngs

response was telling. He said that topical, expositional or character study preaching all comes

from the Bible. Everything we do comes from a Biblical worldview and according to the

Bible, like a series I just did called RPMs, ‑ Recognizing Potential Mates. Those are biblical,

Scriptural principles. So even if its a topical series Im always in the Bible. Later he says:

Were a biblically‑driven church.1 Young mentions his expositional series through James

that he preached several years ago. As far as I can tell from Youngs preaching over the past

ten years, this is the only expositional series he has done. Notice how Young deflects the

question and basically says all his preaching comes from the Bible. By this explanation, Joel

Osteen pastors a biblically driven church.

Preaching and the Great Commission

If the mission of the Church is the evangelism of the lost and the equipping of the

saved, then of all things the Church does, ought not preaching to be at its apex? Of all the

things that are done in a church service, ought not preaching to be central? It is interesting

to compare the account of the giving of the Great Commission in Matthew and Mark.

Whereas Matthew 28:19 speaks of going into all the world and making disciples, Mark

16:15 says Go into all the world and preach the gospel. . . . Obviously preaching plays a

paramount role in the Churchs mandate to fulfill the Great Commission. In recent years, a

few lonely voices have been crying in the wilderness for a return to preaching as biblical

exposition. But they are often drowned out by the din of voices that come from many

places.

The purpose of this chapter is two‑fold. First, I will suggest and comment briefly on

three reasons why preaching is critical to the mission of the Church. Second, I will mention,

if only in a cursory fashion, four movements that are impacting preaching. All of these

movements, in one way or another, are problematic for preaching and have, in my opinion,

hindered preaching in the overall mission of the Church.

Three Reasons Why Preaching is Foundational

for the Mission of the Church

First is the theological reason: the nature of Scripture and the nature of the Church.

God is its ultimate author of Scripture according to 2 Timothy 3:16: All Scripture is

inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, correction, for training in

1 Preaching Creatively: Interview with Ed Young Jr., Preaching (Jan.‑ Feb. 2005),

vol. 20, no. 4, at http://www.preaching.com/resources/past\_issues/archive5/, accessed

October 3, 2009.

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righteousness. When New Testament authors quote the Old Testament, we find that God

and Scripture are used as interchangeable subjects. God is viewed as the author when he is

not the speaker, as in Matthew 19: 4‑5. Sometimes the phrase Scripture says is used when

God is the direct speaker. Twice in Galatians and once in Romans Scripture is called Gods

speech. What Scripture says is the word of God. The first theological foundation for

preaching is that God has spoken. J. I. Packer said Scripture is God preaching.

The nature of the church requires that preaching be paramount in the fulfillment of

her mission. The Great Commission as recorded in Mark 16:15 indicates how Jesus viewed

preaching as the necessary means for the church to fulfill the Great Commission. The

church was birthed in preaching according to Acts 2. Paul says in Romans 10 that faith

comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Evangelistic preaching grows the

church. Biblical preaching edifies the church. The book of Acts clearly shows this. Luke

records summary statements of the results of the preaching of the Word in strategic places in

Acts. Acts tells us the secret of church growth was preaching and prayer. Look at the New

Testament vocabulary for preaching in Acts. For example, in Acts 17:2, Paul opened the

Scripture and explained the meaning to the people. The Pauline epistles are essentially

sermons to believers in local churches. The book of Hebrews is a written sermon. Notice

how it takes Old Testament Scripture, explains, illustrates and applies its meaning to the

New Testament church. The New Testament itself testifies to the foundational nature of

preaching for the mission and purpose of the church. In his swan song, Paul tells young

Timothy to preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2). You cannot have a church without

preaching, and you cannot have church growth without preaching. Preaching is fundamental

to New Testament ecclesiology. Preaching must be foundational in the mission of the

church for theological reasons.

Second, the necessity of preaching for the mission of the church is illustrated in the

history of the Church. Each of the confessions of faith that came out of the Reformation

speak early on about the primacy of preaching for achieving the mission of the church. The

church cannot be the church unless she is the preaching church. The Reformation

engendered a revival of preaching, Biblical preaching, and of expository preaching. Luther

was teaching Romans when Erasmus Greek New Testament was published. Some say one

can actually see when Luther began to make use of the Greek New Testament in his study,

preaching and teaching. It revolutionized his preaching and teaching. The first of Luthers

Ninety‑five theses was on the subject of repentance taken right out of Erasmus Greek New

Testament. Preaching was paramount for Ulrich Zwingli as well. Zwingli came to the

pastorate of the Grossmuenster church in Zurich and on his first Sunday, which was also his

birthday, January 1, 1519, he opened the Bible to Matthew 1:1 and began to preach

expositionally through the Gospel of Matthew. From 1519 until his death in 1531 he

preached though most of the Bible. Our Anabaptist forefathers were heavily influenced by

Zwingli in their preaching.

Calvins exegesis and expositions of Scripture are well known. Calvin left Geneva

after a big fuss with the council and went to Strasburg for three years. When he was finally

persuaded by Farel to return to Zurich three years later, he walked into a packed church. The

people expected him to rail on the city council that had given him so much grief three years

earlier. Instead, Calvin instructed the people to open their Bibles to the verse he left off

preaching from three years earlier and continued his preaching through that book of the

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Bible. The post‑Reformation preaching of the Puritans was essentially expositional in nature.

The best preaching in England, America, and beyond from the eighteenth century to the

present has been expositional preaching. The Reformers, by their own preaching and

writing, show they considered preaching to be critical to the establishment and ongoing

growth and health of the church.

The third reason why preaching is necessary for the mission of the church is the

pastoral reason. Preaching was viewed as the primary method of pastoral care in the history

of the church. The classical definitions of pastoral care throughout church history speak of

preaching as the primary method of doing pastoral care. For example, Luther said:

If any man would preach let him suppress his own words. Let him make them count

in family matters and secular affairs but here in the church he should speak nothing

except the Word of the rich Head of the household otherwise it is not the true

church. Therefore this must be the rule God is speaking that is why a preacher by

virtue of this commission and office is administering the household of God and dare

say nothing but what God says and commands. And although much talking is done

which is outside the Word of God, yet the church is not established by such talk

though men were to turn mad in their insistence upon it.2

Preaching within the church both equips and challenges the church to fulfill the Great

Commission.

At this point we turn our attention to consider four movements, each of which has,

in the opinion of this author, hindered the role of preaching in the Church.

Preaching and the Charismatic Movement

First is the Charismatic movement. My specific concern here is the notion that God

speaks today apart from the Bible with new revelation. According to some Charismatics,

God guides people today by giving them words of direction through all of the same media as

the Bible says God used in the past: visions, prophets, angels, and so forth. Here is the

problem for preaching: it diverts attention from Scripture and ultimately Jesus as Gods final

revelation.

It is interesting to study the use the author of Hebrews makes of Old Testament

quotations. The author quotes the Old Testament directly thirty‑one times. The authors

choice of quotation formulae is instructive of his high view of Scripture. He employs some

form of the verb to speak or to say and never it is written. Furthermore, note that in

the catena of seven quotations in Heb 1:513, God is the subject and some form of the verb

to say is used to introduce the quotations. Notice further in Heb 3:711, the author quotes

a portion of Psalm 95, but here the quotation is introduced by the Holy Spirit says. In Heb

2:1213, Jesus is the subject of the verb say which introduces two Old Testament

quotations from the Psalms and Isaiah. In this latter case, the two Old Testament quotations

are said to be spoken by Jesus, even though in their original Old Testament context, that was

2 Luthers Works, vol. XII, 1413.

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not the case. These examples illustrate the fact that the author views all of Scripture as the

very voice of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The author is here stressing two things: 1) the ongoing relevance of Scripture to

speak to the current situation, and 2) Scripture for the author of Hebrews is Gods direct

speech. Scripture is an authoritative word from God in the present time. The author of

Hebrews focuses on what God is saying now to us through the word of God written in the

past. Not once does the author say: God has given me a word of knowledge to give to

you, as is common in some Charismatic circles today. The author may himself have been an

apostle; certainly he was a leader in the apostolic church. Yet he addresses his people

through Scripture, not extra‑biblical revelation! Where does God speak today? There is a

Charismatic answer to that question and a correct answer to it. When people are looking for

a new word from God apart from Scripture, there is an inevitable loss of Scriptural authority

and Scriptural sufficiency, and preaching is negatively affected. The result is that the church

suffers.

Preaching and the New Homiletic

The second movement is the New Homiletic, formally birthed in 1971 with the

publication of Fred Craddocks As One without Authority. In that book Craddock argued for a

revolution in preaching. For him, old style discursive (read expository) preaching that

has three points and a poem was no longer reaching anybody. That kind of expository

preaching is passé. Preachers need to move in a new direction. Craddocks new direction is

narrative. We need to think in terms of story. The goal of preaching according to the New

Homiletic is to evoke an experience in the listeners. Building on Kierkegaards notion of

indirect communication, Craddock argued that the frontal approach to preaching no longer

worked. What we need to do is to come at people from the side door or the back door via

indirect communication. Craddocks reasoning for this was his belief that people in the

United States had become saturated with Biblical knowledge. Thus, to preach the Bible in a

direct, expositional way, would merely bore people. I have no doubt that was not true in

1971 to the extent Craddock thought, but I also have absolutely no doubt it is not true

today. The biblical illiteracy of our country generally, and people in churches particularly, is

appalling. Now, almost forty years later, the New Homiletic has not been able to deliver

what it promised and many of its former supporters have begun to doubt.3

3 See Thomas Long, What Happened to Narrative Preaching? Journal for Preachers

28.4 (Pentecost 2005): 9‑14. Long admits that today many are beginning to have second

thoughts about the effectiveness of the narrative approach to preaching. After noting the

critique of narrative preaching from the right, the middle, and the left, Long points out

that the critics on the left have been the most severe, alleging that the new homiletics

practitioners have been not merely rhetorically mistaken, theologically misguided, or trendy,

but they have committed far more serious offenses: potential oppression and abuse of

power (12). In the end, however, Long is not willing to give up narrative preaching and

claims that it grows out of a deep sense of the character, shape, and epistemology of the

gospel (13), though he offers little support for this claim.

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Contrary to Eugene Lowry4 and the New Homiletic,5 you do not meet God dancing

on the edge of mystery with sermons constructed in a narrative style in an attempt at indirect

communication. We encounter God not apart from His Word but through His Word. Lowry

appeals to the post‑resurrection account in Luke 24 where Jesus is walking with the disciples

to Emmaus. He makes the point that as soon as the two disciples recognized Jesus, He

vanished. Lowry uses this scene to argue, through a twisted hermeneutic, that we never can

quite get at the truth; when we get close, it vanishes. Lowry fails to note that before Jesus

vanished, Scripture says He taught them the things concerning Himself. He opened the

Scripture, opened their minds, and showed them everything in the Old Testament about

Himself. Jesus words in Luke 24 actually serve to promote the expositional preaching of

Scripture.

Preaching and the Church Growth Movement

The third movement is the Church Growth movement. Ironically, according to

McGavern, it began in the same year as the New Homiletic. The influence of this movement

on Americas evangelical and charismatic churches has been phenomenal. Myriads of books

have been written on the subject of how to grow a church. Many of these books and the

principles behind them are less theological and highly pragmatic in nature. In my opinion,

the Church Growth movement has been a mixed bag. One of the downsides to it has been

the general lack of focus on preaching. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the Church

Growth movement has actually hindered expository preaching in the United States because

it has, inadvertently, de‑emphasized the importance of preaching in the local church. One of

the most surprising things about the books produced by this movement is the lack of

emphasis placed on the role of preaching in church growth. Many do not even mention

preaching. David Eby wrote a book in 1996 entitled Power Preaching for Church Growth: The Role

of Preaching in Growing Churches.6 As far as I know, this was the first book to treat the subject in

book‑length format and Eby is not even in the Church Growth movement. His two chapters

critiquing the Church Growth movement are must reads.

Eby read every book in the church growth movement and charted where they talk

about preaching. In the early years of the movement, only one of the first sixteen books

even listed Biblical preaching as an aspect of church growth. Eby then ransacked the next

forty‑eight books that came out on church growth. In ten thousand pages of material, less

than fifty even mentioned preaching as important in church growth. He then examined all of

the DMin dissertations at Fuller Library and found that of the three hundred and seventy

seven dissertations completed since 1971 (through 1996), only one was written on preaching and

church growth. The Church Growth movement has emphasized marketing and de‑emphasized

4 Eugene Lowry, The Sermon: Dancing the Edge of Mystery (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997)

47.

5 See David Allen, A Tale of Two Roads: Homiletics and Biblical Authority, JETS 43

(2000), 489515.

6 David Eby, Power Preaching for Church Growth: The Role of Preaching in Growing Churches

(Great Britain: Mentor, 1996).

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preaching. Evangelicals are outdoing everyone else as the supreme compromisers in church

work today. What difference is there today between a popular market driven philosophy of

church growth and classical liberalism? Both have resulted in a compromised culture.

Classical liberalism capitulated to culture and much of evangelicalism today in my judgment

is compromising with culture. An undefined theology combined with a seeker sensitive

philosophy undermines the ability of the church to speak prophetically to culture. The

moment a church compromises with culture in ways contrary to Scripture, at that moment

she forfeits her prophetic position in the culture. On the other hand, the moment a church

defies the spirit of the age she forfeits her marketing appeal. The preaching of the Gospel

will always defy the spirit of the age.

Preaching and the Emerging Church Movement

The fourth movement is the Emergent Church (EC) movement.7 Most of the

congregations within this movement have a very amorphous ecclesiology. They have several

websites, chat rooms, their own network, their own conferences, and their own speakers.

The controlling term in the writings of EC authors is postmodernism, with its concomitant

epistemological perspective that people learn less by rationality and more by feeling and

experience. In the November/December 2004 edition of Preaching, the lead article is entitled

Preaching in the Emerging Church: An Interview with Dan Kimball. Kimball states that in

the EC theres great diversity in what they look like, how they think, how they express their

faith, and what they believe theologically.8 The emerging church does not want to get hung

up on theology. Theology is not unimportant, but there is a resistance to drawing lines

theologically in this movement. I suspect there is some correlation between this diverse

theological outlook and the diversity one finds in EC preaching.

Kimballs comments on preaching are a mixed bag. For example, when asked are

there some things you are learning about preaching and communication as you go through

this process, Kimball responded: I would say almost everything I was taught in Seminary I

do not use.9 This negative attitude toward how preaching was taught in seminaries is

reflected among many in the EC movement. I have observed in the literature produced by

EC authors a general denigration of preaching in an expositional fashion. However, even

7 For a balanced treatment of what the Emerging Church movement is all about

from one of its key leaders, consult Dan Kimball, The Emerging Church (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 2003). For a valuable critique of the movement, see D. A. Carson, Becoming

Conversant with the Emergent Church: Understanding a Movement and its Implications (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 2005), and Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, Why Were Not Emergent by Two Guys

Who Should Be (Chicago: Moody, 2008).

8 Preaching in the Emerging Church: An Interview with Dan Kimball, Preaching

(Nov. Dec., 2004), vol. 20, no. 3, at

http://www.preaching.com/resources/past\_issues/11556856/archive5/, accessed on

October 1, 2009.

9 Ibid.

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here, the EC is not monolithic. Attitudes and practice range from the extreme of Doug

Pagitt who champions a dialogical approach to preaching10 to a more text‑based approach.

Conclusion

We have won the battle in the Southern Baptist Convention over the inerrancy of

Scripture. We are in my judgment right now engaged in a battle that is almost as significant.

It is the battle over the sufficiency of Scripture in preaching. Is the Bible, and the Bible

alone, sufficient to change hearts, and to grow a church? Many are practicing a preaching

style that in the final analysis fails to give the people in their churches the word of God.

Many have compromised with the culture and have moved away from preaching in an

expositional fashion. A few years ago an evangelical Romanian pastor had to leave his

church because it was discovered that after the fall of Chauchescku and the demise of

Communism in Romanian he had been one of those pastors who was a collaborator with the

Communists. They asked him why did he do it? He said, I hate communism; it is a great

evil. I did it because I thought it was the best way my church could function in the culture.

And I thought that I would be able to help my people and protect my people if I just fudged

and collaborated with the Communists. As a result, that pastor lost his church. The

mission of the Church does not permit us to collaborate with the culture. The Gospel has

always been counter‑cultural.

The mission of the Church cannot be fulfilled without preaching. Preaching that

does not communicate the Gospel clearly and that does not explain the meaning of the text

of Scripture to Christians so as to equip them to fulfill the Churchs mission will result in a

spiritually dwarfed Church and a truncated witness to the world.

10 Doug Pagitt, Preaching Re‑Imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith.

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

http://baptistcenter.com/fall\_09\_preaching.pdf

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Preaching the Forest and the Trees: Integrating Biblical Theology with Expository Preaching Dr. Tony Merida

Preaching The Forest And The Trees:

Integrating Biblical Theology With

Expository Preaching

Dr. Tony Merida

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Introduction

Evangelicals through the years have emphasized the need for Christian preachers to

preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. The sixteenth‑century Puritan William

Perkins summarized his theory saying, Preach one Christ, by Christ, to the praise of Christ.

To God alone be the glory.1 Likewise, John Broadus summarized his approach saying,

The subject of preaching is divine truth, centrally the gospel as revealed and offered in

Jesus Christ.2

While many would say amen! to these affirmations on the importance of the

gospel, others would also want to emphasize the primacy of expository preaching.

Essentially, expository preaching attempts to explain and apply the biblical text in its context.

This poses an interesting dilemma for Christian preachers. Bryan Chapell, President of

Covenant Theological Seminary and preaching professor, has raised the question precisely

asking, How do I preach the text that is present and preach Christ where he may not seem

to be present?3 In asking this question, two assumptions are being made: (1) expositors

should be faithful to the context of a passage, and (2) Christian preachers should desire to

proclaim the glories of Christ.

1William Perkins, The Art of Prophesying, rev. Sinclair Ferguson, first published in

Latin in 1592 and in English 1606, (reprint, Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 79.

2John Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, new and rev. ed. Jesse

Witherspoon, 6. C. H. Dodd provides a summary of several elements of Pauls kerygma: (1)

Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled and the new age was inaugurated by the coming of

Christ, (2) he was born of the seed of David, (3) he died according to the Scriptures to

deliver mankind out of this present evil age, (4) he was buried, (5) he rose on the third day

according to the Scriptures, (6) he is now exalted at the right hand of God as the Son of God

and Lord of the living and dead, and (7) he will come again as the Judge and Savior of

humanity. C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (New York: Harper and

Row, 1964), 17.

3Bryan Chapell, Christ‑Centered Heart, William E. Conger Jr. Lectures on Biblical

Preaching at Beeson Divinity School, February 26, 2002, cassette.

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How does one deal with the text with integrity and preach Christ from a text like

Nehemiah? After all, many Old Testament instructors declare that you should not look for

Jesus under every rock! Students are taught to respect and consider the original hearers.

Thus, the question remains as to whether the preacher can accomplish these two goals

(exposition and Christ‑centeredness) without arbitrarily inserting Jesus into the text or

simply leapfrogging to Jesus at the end of the sermon.

Chapell argues that one of the solutions to this dilemma is for the expositor to see

the Bible as a unified book of redemptive history, which culminates in the person and work

of Christ. He states,

In a similar sense, preachers cannot properly explain a seed (or portion) of biblical

revelation, even if they say many true things about it, unless they relate it to the

redeeming work of God that all Scripture ultimately purposes to disclose. In this

sense, the entire Bible is Christ‑centered because his redemptive work in all of its

incarnational, atoning, rising, interceding, and reigning dimensions is the capstone of

all of Gods revelation of his dealings with his people. Thus, no aspect of revelation

can be thoroughly understood or explained in isolation of Christs redeeming work.4

Therefore, the goal for Christ‑centered expositors is not to look for Jesus under every

rock, but rather to find out how a particular text fits into the whole redemptive story that

culminates in Christ. Contextual analysis ‑‑ a topic emphasized in many expository

preaching books ‑‑ may begin with the book context of the selected passage but it should

not end there. Ultimately, the particular book is within the wider biblical context. In other

words, it is a short story within the meta‑narrative of Scripture.

Chapell provides a helpful analogy to describe this process. He says that preachers

should use both a microscope and a theological fish‑eye lens5 when examining a text, in

order to see the forest (the larger redemptive story) and the trees (the immediate text and its

details). It seems that expositional theory often focuses upon the trees to the neglect of the

forest, missing an important dimension of the text and a degree of its glory and grace. Good

exposition will expose the trees and the forest, giving respect for the original author and

respect for the redemptive story and its hero: Jesus.

The discipline that deals with the unfolding of Gods redemptive work in history is

often called biblical theology. The purpose of this article is discuss the need to integrate

biblical theology with expository preaching in order for the preacher to be both faithful to

the selected text and the task of proclaiming Christ as the hero of redemptive history.

However, this brief report is but the tip of the iceberg. The goal here is mainly to expose

various voices on this issue. The burden is to make a good thing (expository preaching)

better.

4Bryan Chapell, Christ‑Centered Preaching, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 276.

5Ibid., 275.

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To make a case for the marriage of these two disciplines, the centrality of the Bible in

expository preaching will first be discussed. Next, the centrality of Christ in the Bible will be

considered. Finally, the subsequent need for integrating biblical theology with exposition

will be proposed. In the end, some concluding thoughts about the practical benefits of

Christ‑centered exposition will be offered.

The Centrality of the Bible in Expository Preaching

While there are many nuances to ones definition of expository preaching, the

common agreement seems to be that expository preaching is governed by the text of

Scripture. John Broadus provided a general definition: An expository discourse may be

defined as one which is occupied mainly, or at any rate very largely, with the exposition of

Scripture.6

Chapell simply maintains that expository preaching attempts to present and apply

the truths of a specific biblical passage.7 Similarly, John MacArthur Jr. argues that

expository preaching involves presenting a passage entirely and exactly as God intended.8

Sidney Greidanus states that exposition describes what is involved in biblical preaching, i.e.,

the exposition of a biblical passage (or passages).9 John Piper asserts, All Christian

preaching should be the exposition and application of biblical texts. Our authority as

preachers sent by God rises and falls with our manifest allegiance to the text of Scripture.10

Thus, the explanation of a passage (or passages) of Scripture is central to each of these

writers.

Moreover, F. B. Meyer, Harold Bryson, and Andrew Blackwood are representative

homileticians who articulate expository preaching in terms of sermon form. For these

6John Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, new and rev. ed. Jesse

Witherspoon (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 144. For other definitions See also:

Donald Miller, The Way to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 26; Jerry Vines

and Jim Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 29; Merrill Unger, Principles for

Expository Preaching (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1955; John Stott, Between Two Worlds (Grand

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 125‑126. Haddon Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 2d ed. (Grand

Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21.

7Chapell, Christ‑Centered Preaching, 30.

8John MacArthur Jr. and The Masters Seminary Faculty, Rediscovering Expository

Preaching (Dallas: Word, 1982), 23‑24.

9Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

1988), 11.

10John Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004),

41; In this particular text, Piper adds that expositors should not only explain Gods Word

but also exult over the Word in order to bring pleasure to the hearer and glory to God; Ibid.,

55.

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authors, expository preaching deals with the length of the passage or the origin of the sermon series.

Blackwood asserts, Expository preaching means that the light for any sermon comes mainly

from a Bible passage longer than two or three consecutive verses.11 F. B. Meyer offers his

view saying, We are able to define expository preaching as the consecutive treatment of

some book or extended portion of Scripture.12 Similar to Meyer, Bryson states that

expository preaching involves the art of preaching a series of sermons either consecutively

or selectively from a Bible book.13

Therefore, some theorists argue that expository preaching simply involves presenting

and applying the truths of a particular biblical passage. Other theorists add that expository

preaching involves preaching a specific length of passage or a specific type of sermon series.

Both perspectives, however, emphasize the centrality of the Bible in expository preaching.

The sermon should be driven by the text of Scripture.

The Centrality of Christ in the Bible

Understanding the nature of Scripture seems to be an essential requirement for

preachers who wish to expound what the biblical text says. Many homileticians assert that

the primary emphasis of the Bible is upon redemptive history, which culminates in Christs

person and work. For example, Arturo Azurdia argues that the Bible is a record of the

redemption of the people of God by His Son, Jesus Christ.14 If the Bible focuses upon

Christs redemptive work, then this should have practical implications for expositors who

wish to proclaim the Bible accurately.

Those who wish to challenge the unity of the Bible and its Christocentric emphasis

must give an answer to several biblical texts that seem to demonstrate this idea. For

example, one should consider the following texts:

[Jesus said,] You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal

life; and it is they that bear witness about me (John 5:39, emphasis added).

[Jesus said,] If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me (John

5:46, emphasis added).

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the

Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27, emphasis added).

11Andrew Blackwood, Expository Preaching Today (Grand Rapids: Baker, Baker Original

Paperback, 1975), 13.

12F. B. Meyer, Expository Preaching (London: Hodder & Stoughten, 1910; reprint,

Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 25.

13Harold T. Bryson, Expository Preaching (Nashville: Broadman & Holman), 39.

14Arturo Azurdia, Spirit Empowered Preaching (Ross‑Shire, England: Christian Focus

Publications, 1998), 52.

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Then he [Jesus] said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was with

you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and

the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand

the Scriptures... (Luke 24:44‑45, emphasis added).

While preachers should not assume unwarranted connections to Jesus, they also should not

overlook or ignore what seemed to be very clearthat the Old Testament writers were

pointing to the Messiah.

Of course, some authors have observed the centrality of Christ in the Bible.

Norman Geisler states, Christ is presented as the tie between the Testaments, the content

of the whole cannon, and the unifying theme within each book of the Bible.15 Christopher

J. H. Wright says, The Old Testament tells the story which Jesus completes.16 Similarly,

Donald Juel posits, The beginnings of Christian reflection can be traced to the

interpretations of Israels scriptures, and the major focus of that scriptural interpretation was

Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah.17 Each of these authors argue that the person and

work of Christ is the main message of the Bible.

Recent homileticians have looked to Paul as a model for the necessity of preaching

Christ.18 James Thompson reminds preachers, Whether Paul refers to the subject of his

preaching as Jesus Christ or the gospel, he is actually referring to the narrative of Gods actions

in Jesus Christ.19 Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix referred to the early church saying, Paul,

too, centered on Jesus, claiming to the Corinthians that he had determined not to know

anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).20 These

evangelicals argue that Christ was the main subject of Pauls preaching, even though he did

address other topics.

The Integration of Biblical Theology with Exposition

Even though the need to preach Christ may be an obvious concern for evangelicals,

there seems to be a missing element; namely, the need to preach Christ through careful

15Norman Geisler, Christ: The Theme of the Bible (Chicago: Moody, 1968), 7.

16Christopher J. H. Wright, Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament (Downers Grove:

Inter‑Varsity Press, 1995), 2. He adds that students must look at Jesus in the light of the

history of the Old Testament, but also that he sheds light backwards on it.

17Donald Juel, Messianic Exegesis (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 1.

18See James Thompson, Preaching Like Paul (Louisville: Westminster: John Knox

Press, 2001).

19Ibid., 44.

20Vines and Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit, 21.

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exposition. According to some authors, such preaching is possible because the Bible is a

unified book of redemptive history, and to treat one particular text means that one should

consider how the selected text fits into the whole redemptive story. This idea comes from

their understanding of biblical theology.

For example, Graeme Goldsworthy, D. A. Carson, and J. I. Packer argue the need

for biblical theology in hermeneutics and its subsequent use in expository preaching. Packer

defines biblical theology as the umbrella‑name for those disciplines that explore the unity of

the Bible, delving into the contents of books, showing the links between them, and pointing

up the ongoing flow of the revelatory and redemptive process that reached its climax in

Jesus Christ.21 So Packer emphasizes the uniqueness of particular texts but also wants to

emphasize the unity of the canon as well.

Similarly, Goldsworthy claims that biblical theology helps understand the redemptive

nature of Scripture because it shows the relationship of all the parts of the Old Testament

to the person and work of Jesus Christ and, therefore, to the Christian.22 He adds, The

Bible is a book about Christ which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. . . . We begin with Jesus

Christ, and we see every part of the Bible in relationship to him and his saving work. This is

true of the Old Testament as it is of the New.23 Goldsworthy states his perspective on the

purpose of preaching saying, It ought to be the aim of every pastor to bring all members of

his or her congregation to maturity in Christ. But they cannot mature if they do not know

the Christ in the Bible, the Christ to whom the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, give

a unified and inspired testimony.24 For Goldsworthy, by considering redemptive history,

the preacher is able to explain the redemptive focus of each passage (or passages) of

Scripture.25

Carson emphasizes how biblical theology focuses on the unity of the Bible and

redemptive history, without sacrificing the individual documents and each historical context.

He says, On the one hand, biblical theology will try to preserve one glorious diversity of all

the biblical documents; on the other, it will try to uncover all that holds them together,

21J. I. Packer, Forward in The Unfolding Mystery (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988),

7‑8.

22Graeme Goldsworthy, According to the Plan (Leicester, England: Inter‑Varsity Press,

2001), 27.

23Ibid.

24Graeme Goldsworthy, Biblical Theology as the Heartbeat of Effective Ministry

in Biblical Theology, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 286.

25Graeme Goldsworthy, Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture (Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 2000), 30.

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sacrificing neither historical particularity nor the unifying sweep of redemptive history.26

The implication for preaching, then, is for the expositor to look at the immediate context as

well as the canonical context. Carson calls the process of explaining the whole Bible innercanonical

preaching. He states, At its best, expository preaching is preaching which

however dependent it may be for its content, upon text(s) at hand, draws attention to innercanonical

connections (connections within Scripture) that inexorably moves to Jesus

Christ.27 For Carson, Christ‑centered preaching happens by relating the biblical‑theological

connections within Scripture.

Others have also articulated the need for expounding the larger redemptive context

of the Bible when doing exposition. Edmund Clowney argues that by integrating biblical

theology, the preacher can always maintain the needed Christ‑centered focus, even from the

Old Testament. He claims that Christ illustrates this pattern in the Emmaus Road

encounter.28 Similarly, Merill Unger urges preachers to pay attention to the unity of the Bible

and its redemptive‑historical place in the canon. He states, Above all he [the preacher]

must constantly remind himself that Scripture itself is the source of his theology and that the

Bible as a doctrinal source‑book is a unity.29

William D. Thompson argues that if one does not expose the redemptive nature of

Scripture, one cannot preach biblically.30 Walter Kaiser also urges preachers to stay true to

the original context of the passage, but also to give consideration to the larger context of the

Bible as well.31

Further, David L. Larsen posits that Christian preachers cannot preach a text in the

Old Testament the way would a rabbi. He states that preaching of any part of Scripture

must stand within a clear sense of theological construct, and for the Christian proclaimer

26D. A. Carson, Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology, in New Dictionary of

Biblical Theology, eds. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, and Graeme

Goldsworthy (Downers Grove: Inter‑Varsity Press, 2000), 100‑101.

27D. A. Carson, The Primacy of Expository Preaching, Bethlehem Conference for

Pastors, 1995, cassette.

28Edmund Clowney, Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures, in The Preacher and Preaching,

ed. Samuel T. Logan (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1986),

165.

29Unger, 155.

30William Thompson, Preaching Biblically (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 74. Thompson

posits, The Bible is a witness to the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ, the meaning of

whose life, death, and resurrection controls the meaning of every passage.

31Walter Kaiser, Toward an Exegetical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 140. He

calls this process theological exegesis.

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that construct is Christocentric.32 Sidney Greidanus refers to the process of preaching

Gods acts from the perspective of the New Testament Christocentric preaching.33 He

explains, In other words, Christocentric preaching requires that a passage receive a

theocentric interpretation not only in its own (Old Testament) horizon but also in the

broader horizon of the whole canon. In this way one can do justice to two sets of biblical

testimonies: on the one hand, Christ as the eternal Logos is present and active in Old

Testament times, and on the other hand, Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.34

At this point, some conclude that these authors are only talking about evangelistic

preaching, but that is not the case. Thomas Smith qualifies this approach stating that such

an idea shows a limited understanding of the gospel, as well as a misunderstanding of ethics.

He argues that New Testament writers deal with every ethical requirement, every matter of

conduct, as it is rooted in the redemptive work of Christ.35 Jay Adams also claims that

ethical and evangelistic preaching must be Christ‑centered. He states, Jesus Christ must be

at the heart of every sermon you preach. That is just as true of edificational preaching as it is

of evangelistic preaching.36 For these representatives, the clear division between preaching

the gospel to unbelievers and preaching ethics to believers is unwarranted. While it is true

that unbelievers need to be confronted with the gospel, believers also need to be reminded

of the gospel for perspective and pointed to the gospel for power.

Practical Application

In light of this argument, the obvious question is about how the preacher should

structure an expository sermon that integrates biblical theology thereby emphasizing Gods

redeeming work in Christ. While few preaching theorists have provided practical help on

this matter, Bryan Chapell has offered some useful ideas that can be implemented easily if

the preacher will give attention to the texts position in relation to Christ.

32David L. Larsen, The Anatomy of Preaching (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1989), 163‑164.

33Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and The Ancient Text (Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 1988), 119.

34Ibid.

35Thomas N. Smith, Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing in Reforming Pastoral

Ministry, ed. John Armstrong (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 109. Smith states, We

[preachers] must see the indivisibility of theology and conduct and must see each in its vital

relationship to Jesus Himself. For a discussion on the distinction made between the kerygma

and the didache, as presented by C. H. Dodd, in The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, see

Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology, 70. Clowney opposes Dodds separation. He admits

that a message may be presented differently in certain contexts, but the gospel must always

be proclaimed both inside and outside the church ‑‑ evangelistically and ethically.

36Jay Adams, Preaching with Purpose (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 147

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Chapell states that every text will fall into one of three categories. First, a text may

reveal text disclosure. This means that a particular text explicitly mentions the redeeming

work of God in Christ. Second, a text may reveal type disclosure. He defines typology

as it relates to Christs person and work is the study of the correspondence between

persons, events, and institutions that first appear in the Old Testament and preview, prepare,

or more fully express New Testament salvation truths.37 Third, a text may also reveal

context disclosure. In this category, Chapell has four sub‑categories. He uses the phrase

context disclosure to refer to the act of disclosing the redemptive focus by pointing out if a text

is (1) predictive of the work of Christ, (2) preparatory for the work of Christ, (3) reflective of

the work of Christ, and/or (4) resultant of the work of Christ.38 In other words, the

expositor may show how every passages is related to Gods redeeming work by identifying

where it lies in relation to Christs person and work.

While one could list many benefits of integrating biblical theology with expository

preaching, only three will be noted. First, by integrating biblical theology with expository

preaching, the preacher will be able to faithfully preach the gospel every week, while also

maturing the body of Christ. Obviously, the gospel needs to be proclaimed clearly to

unbelievers. However, preachers should also remember that the gospel is more than a ticket

to heaven. Tim Keller sates, The gospel is not just the A‑B‑Cs of Christianity but is the A

to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to

enter the kingdom, but the way we make all progress in the kingdom.39 This seems to be

what Paul is saying in Gal. 2:14, when he reported that Peters conduct was not in step

with the truth of the gospel. In Kellers words, The gospel needs to be applied to every

area of ones thinking, feeling, relating, working, and behaving.40

Second, and related to the first, by incorporating biblical theology with expository

preaching, preachers also will avoid the pitfall of treating biblical stories simply as moral

examples to follow. Many preachers look at the text, such as stories about David, and make

the sermon a basic character study. While there are many examples to be learned from

characters in the text, one should be careful about making that the totality of the sermon. A

moral example is not wrong in and of itself, but it is problematic if it is done by itself. If

Christianity is about grace‑enabled, gospel‑centered living, then our exhortations should be

rooted in Gods grace that give the listeners hope because of the accomplishments of Christ.

For it is by Gods grace that we are saved, set apart, and enabled to be people of moral

excellence, who reflect and rejoice in Gods glory.

37Chapell, Christ‑Centered Preaching, 281‑282.

38Ibid., 282‑288.

39Tim Keller, The Centrality of the Gospel [article on‑line]; available from

http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/index.cfm?fuseaction=tkeller; Internet; accessed 5

March, 2007.

40Ibid. See also Gal. 3:1‑3.

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Third, by integrating biblical theology with expository preaching, the preacher will be

able to confront the postmodern culture that does not have knowledge of the biblical metanarrative.

The degree of biblical literacy today seems to be growing increasingly. Therefore,

it seems to be a necessity that preachers give the hearers the big picture on a consistent

basis. Indeed, Christ‑centered exposition is needed in every generation, but this particular

generation seems to even intensify the need for preachers to preach the forest and the trees.

http://baptistcenter.com/fall\_09\_preaching.pdf

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The Holy Spirit in Preaching Dr. Jake Roudkovski

The Holy Spirit in Preaching

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Introduction

he Holy Spirit is indispensable to the task of effective preaching. Charles Haddon

Spurgeon is reported to have climbed the fifteen steps leading up to the pulpit in the

Metropolitan Tabernacle while he muttered at each step, I believe in the Holy Ghost.1

Spurgeon exhorted his students to depend on the Holy Spirit in preaching: If there is to be

a Divine result from Gods Word, the Holy Spirit must go forth with it.2 Stephen Olford

contended, Only the Holy Spirit can transform a manuscript into a message.3 How can we

preach messages that bring about divine results? The answer lies in a fresh and continual

dependence on the Holy Spirit.4

Even though the intent of the article is not to provide an exhaustive treatment on

the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching, I will attempt to give a general overview to the role

of the Holy Spirit in preaching by amplifying the preachers dependence on the Holy Spirit

in four areas: (1) the preachers dependence on the Holy Spirit in his daily life, (2) the

preachers dependence on the Holy Spirit in his preparation, (3) the preachers dependence

on the Holy Spirit in the preaching event, and (4) the preachers dependence on the work of

Holy Spirit among his audience.

The Holy Spirit and the Preacher

The proclaimer of the Word must depend on the Holy Spirit in his daily life. The

preachers dependence on the Holy Spirit occurs when he is aware of what the Holy Spirit

has done in his life and then when he is eager to obey the commandments of the Word of

God in regard to the Holy Spirit. When a person places his or her faith in Jesus as Savior

1John Stott, Between Two Worlds (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 334.

2Charles Haddon Spurgeon, An All‑Round Ministry (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim, 1973),

339.

3Stephen Olford, Anointed Expository Preaching (Nashville: B&H, 1998), 214.

4Greg Heisler, Spirit‑Led Preaching (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 153.

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and Lord, the Holy Spirit brings to pass several dynamics to the life of the believer. First,

the Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of conversion (Romans 8:9). The Holy

Spirit does not come in and then move out when a believer sins like a person who checks in

and out at the hotel. The Holy Spirit comes into the believers life and finds a permanent

residence there. When the preacher is aware that God in His grace saved him, he should be

eternally grateful for the work of the Spirit in his life.

Second, when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit seals the

believer (Ephesians 1:13). The sealing refers to an official mark of identification placed on a

letter, contract, or other document. That document was officially under the authority of the

person whose insignia was on the seal. When one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, he or

she is placed under the authority of Jesus Christ. When the preacher is aware that he has

been sealed by the Holy Spirit, he should rejoice that he no longer is under the authority of

Satan but under the authority of Christ!

Third, the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer at the moment of conversion (1

Corinthians 12: 13). Many sincere Christians seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit; however,

nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to seek it. The baptism of the Holy Spirit takes

place in ones life when the person gives his or her life to Jesus Christ. I believe that one

does not receive the Holy Spirit in parts but in His entirety at the moment of conversion.

When the proclaimer of Gods Word is aware that he has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, it

should motivate him to seek even greater intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit provides discernment to the person in relation to his call to

preach. God calls individuals to the ministry of proclamation (Jeremiah 1:4‑5). When a man

receives the call from God to ministry, the Holy Spirit provides discernment to the nature

and the purpose of the call (Acts 9: 6‑17). The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to individuals

when they trust Jesus as Savior and Lord (Romans 12: 3‑8; 1 Corinthians 12: 8‑11, 27‑31;

Ephesians 4: 11‑12; 1 Peter 4: 10‑11). Just as a believer discerns by the Holy Spirit that he

has been called to the ministry, he also discerns what his spiritual gifts may bewhether

they are knowledge, wisdom, preaching, teaching, or encouragement, among others.

To depend on the Holy Spirit in preaching, one must be aware of what the Holy

Spirit has done in his life. His awareness of the Holy Spirits indwelling, sealing, baptism,

and help with discerning the call to preach, should encourage him to be obedient to the

commandments of the Word of God in regard to the Holy Spirit.

The Bible gives four specific commands for the believer in relation to the Holy

Spirit. Two commandments are negative and two commandments are positive. The first

negative command is for believers not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Believers

grieve the Holy Spirit when they sin. When I tell my seven‑year‑old daughter not to do

something and she disobeys, it grieves me deeply. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is grieved when

believers lie, steal, harbor bitterness and unforgiving spirits. A single sin grieves the Holy

Spirit. The moment the Holy Spirit convicts believers of a specific sin, they are to confess it

and renounce it through the power of God (Proverbs 28:13).

Second, believers are not to quench the Holy Spirit of God (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The word quench means to put out the fire, stifle, smother, suppress. When believers

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suppress what the Holy Spirit wants to do through them, the Holy Spirit is quenched. When

believers say yes to sin, they grieve the Holy Spirit; when believers say no to what He

wants to do through them, the Holy Spirit is quenched. One of the ways believers quench

the Holy Spirit is when they are not willing to witness to unbelievers. Approximately nintyfive

to ninty‑seven percent of American Christians do not share their faith on a regular basis.

According to one evangelism specialist, no more than five percent of ministerial staff

leadership has ever led a lost person to Christ through a one to one relationship.5 When

believers refuse to witness, they quench the Holy Spirit of God.

The way believers do not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit is when they obey two

positive commands. First, we are told to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5: 17‑21).

Several ideas communicated from ......... help us understand what it means to be filled

with the Holy Spirit. One idea is that of direction, like a wind blowing into the sails of the

ship provides direction to it. Another idea is one of permeation, like how salt penetrates

meat in order to preserve it and flavor it. A third idea is one of total control, like a person

who is drunk is not in control of his or her behavior. From these ideas, we can derive that

to be filled with the Spirit means to be directed, permeated, and controlled by the Holy

Spirit. When believers are tempted to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit, they need to ask

God to fill them with His Spirit.

The second command in relation to the Holy Spirit is to walk in the Spirit (Galatians

5: 16‑26). Walking in the Spirit is a daily awareness and surrender to the Holy Spirit of God.

As believers go through the day, they are to surrender their desires, attitudes, and passions to

the total control of the Holy Spirit, who brings about the fruit of the Spirit to their lives

(Galatians 5:22‑23). When believers are walking in the Spirit, they are able not to grieve or

quench the Holy Spirit. A delicate difference between filling and walking in the Spirit lies in

how walking in the Spirit is a daily awareness of the control of the Holy Spirit while being

filled with the Spirit is being empowered for certain tasks, which for preachers includes the

preaching event.

When I prepare for the preaching event, I seek dependence on the Holy Spirit in my

daily life. I thank God for what the Holy Spirit has done for me personally through His

indwelling, His sealing, His baptism, His calling, and His spiritual gifts. Then I ask God to

help me not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit brings conviction in any

of these areas I ask the Lord to bring cleansing, forgiveness, and transformation. I plead

with the Lord to fill me with the Holy Spirit so that I may have power to preach. When I

conclude my prayer, I ask the Lord to allow me to walk in the Spirit throughout the day so

that I may not miss opportunities to share my faith with those He is going to put in my path

that day.

The Holy Spirit and Preparation

In addition to dependence on the Holy Spirit in his daily life, the preacher must be

willing to depend on the Holy Spirit in his preparation for the task of preaching. The Holy

5Jay Strack and Robert Witty, Do the Work of an Evangelist (Nashville: Broadman,

1990), 29.

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Spirit has been abused by some preachers who wait to the last moment for God to give

them a message using Mark 3:11 as a proof text. In the passage, Jesus stated, But when

they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will

speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that: for it not you who speak, but the

Holy Spirit.6 The problem with this rationale is that in the context of Mark 3:11 the

audience is persecuted Christians not procrastinating preachers.

To use the Holy Spirit as a pretext for not spending adequate time in preparation is

to ignore an exhortation from Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15: Be diligent to present yourself

approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of

truth. The words diligent and worker convey ideas of hard work and demanding labor.

Spurgeon noted aptly, I cannot imagine the Spirit waiting at the door of a sluggard, and

supplying the deficiencies created by indolence.7 As the preacher does the hard work of

exegesis, employing good hermeneutics and homiletics, he will be able to to lay open the

mind of the Holy Spirit in the biblical text.8

Even though the techniques of sermon preparation are beyond the scope of this

paper, I feel it is imperative to elucidate the role of the Holy Spirits illumination during

sermon preparation. Illumination is neither revelation nor inspiration. The Holy Spirit was

an agent in revelation of His Word (1 Corinthians 2:10). Inspiration is the process by which

men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Timothy 1:21). The human writers of

the Bible received revelation when God inspired Scripture. Illumination enables believers to

comprehend Gods truth in the final and complete revelation of it in Scripture.9 Jesus

instructed his disciples in John 16:13: However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He

will guide you into all the truth. The Holy Spirit is the agent of illumination.

When the preacher exegetes a passage and toils with the tasks of hermeneutics and

homiletics, he must ask throughout the process for illumination by the Holy Spirit. Whether

it is reading the passage, examining commentaries, or doing word studies, the proclaimer of

the Word must pray for the Holy Spirits enablement in comprehension of the passage.

Whether it is looking for appropriate illustrations, crafting strategy for argumentation, or

arriving to application points, the preacher must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as the agent

who helps to make truth known not only to the preacher but also to the audience. Whether

it is looking for an acute title, arranging the message around themes, movement, and points,

or preparing a listening guide for the audience, the preacher must depend on the Holy Spirit

to help him understand the passage and the best ways to communicate it to his audience.

6All quotations are from The Holy Bible, New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas

Nelson, 1982).

7Spurgeon, Spurgeons Lectures to His Students (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1945), 191.

8Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 28.

9John MacArthur, Preaching (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 6.

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In my experience as a pastor, who has had responsibility to prepare at least three

messages weekly, I faced at least two major challenges in preparation. The first had to do

with planning my messages. Earlier in my ministry, I planned on Monday what I felt God

wanted me to preach on Sunday. Later, I realized the benefits of planning my messages

three to six months in advance: the Holy Spirit became a guide who could see further into

the future than the pastor could anticipate.10 In response to those who feel that planning

ones messages does not fully depend on the Holy Spirit because it does take into account

congregational needs, the preacher can be assured that God is aware of the congregational

needs just as well three months in advance as He does three days ahead of time.11 If the

Holy Spirit leads the preacher to other texts besides the ones planned, he should be obedient

to the immediate prompting of the Holy Spirit. Over the years, even though the preaching

plan became a beneficial tool, I attempted not to allow it to take precedence over the Holy

Spirits immediate leadership.

The second challenge in preparation was learning to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit

when facing major catastrophic events. When terrorist attacks on September 11th took

place, I felt a departure from the preaching plan was necessary in order to address the attack

and speak to the presence and nature of evil in the world. On August 28th, 2005, I was

flying from a speaking engagement in Seattle to New Orleans. My plans were to arrive late

Saturday in New Orleans so that I could speak at the church I pastored at that time on

Sunday morning. Although my flight was delayed for several hours because of hurricane

Katrina looming in the Gulf of Mexico, it was the last flight allowed to land in Louis

Armstrong International Airport Sunday morning. Amazingly, the first series of messages

planned for that dreadful Sunday was about how to respond to the storms of life as a family.

Because the mandatory evacuation in New Orleans did not include suburb of my church, we

went ahead with Sunday morning services. Even though the two services were abbreviated

in order to encourage church members to evacuate, I felt that I needed to deliver the

message. That message became a springboard for the five weeks following Katrina,

challenging our church to lead in recovery efforts.

I learned from my ministry that facing the preparatory challenges of advanced

planning and responding to catastrophic events are possible with continual dependence on

the Holy Spirit. From September 11th, I learned that sometimes the pastor must deviate

from his preaching schedule, led by the Holy Spirit, in order to address the current crisis.

From my experience with Hurricane Katrina, I learned that the Holy Spirit could use the

theme of the message planned in advance to address major catastrophes.

The Holy Spirit and Proclamation

When the preacher depends on the Holy Spirit in his daily life and then with

preparation of the messages, he must be careful to depend on the Holy Spirit as he delivers

the message. Spurgeon commented on the importance of depending on the Holy Spirit in

delivery, It were better to speak six words in the power of the Holy Ghost than to preach

10Joe Cothen, The Pulpit Is Waiting (Grenta: Pelican, 1998), 56.

11Stephen Rummage, Planning Your Preaching (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 24.

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seventy years worth of sermons without the Spirit.12 In the analysis of the delivery in which

the preacher depends on the Holy Spirit, the following four salient features are noteworthy:

the goal, the substance, the focus, the anointing, and challenges in delivery. The goal of the

preacher in proclamation is articulated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:4: And my speech and my

preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the

Spirit and power. As the preacher delivers his message, his goal is not to demonstrate his

eloquence or erudition but to allow God to manifest His Spirit and power through the

message.

The manifestation of Spirit and power through the message is possible when the

substance of the message is the Word of God. Paul put forth the content of his message in

2 Corinthians 2: 1: And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of

speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. The testimony of God

refers to Gods revealed Scripture. Just as the preacher is confident in the inspiration of the

Word and seeks the illumination of the Holy Spirit in preparation, he should not depart from

Gods revealed Scripture in delivery. When the substance of the message is Scripture, the

preacher must also be reminded that the focus of delivery is the person of Jesus Christ. Paul

continued in 2 Corinthians 2:2: For I determined not to know anything among you except

Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The ministry of the Holy Spirit includes testifying of Jesus

(John 15:26) as well as bringing glory to Christ (John 16:12‑14). When the focus in delivery

is on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit fulfills His role and demonstrates power in the process.

One way to describe the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power is in terms of

the anointing of the message. A definition of anointed delivery may be elusive, but when

anointing is present, people know it; when it is absent, they also know it.13 In a recent

dissertation, Landon Dowden identified three characteristics of anointing in delivery:

boldness, clarity of speech, and a sense of peace.14 Boldness was not the authority to share

whatever the preacher desires, but the courage to declare what God commands. Clarity of

speech is evident not only in the proclamation of the message but also in the liberty of

utterance. A sense of peace is the work of the Spirit in delivery when panic and frustration

are eliminated and substituted with an aura of relaxed naturalness.15

In my ministry, I faced two major challenges in relation to the dependence on the

Holy Spirit in delivery. The first has been to adapt to the unpredictable factors surrounding

the preaching event. One may plan, prepare, and pray and then during the service the

testimony goes longer that anticipated. Does the preacher then preach everything or half of

what he planned, or does he move straight to the invitation? What if the electricity goes off

12Spurgeon, Twelve Sermons on the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 122.

13Bill Bennett, Thirty Minutes to Raise the Dead (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 176.

14Landon Dowden, An Examination of Pneumatological Content in Southern

Baptist Homiletic Theory since 1870" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary, 2007), 131‑2.

15Craig Skinner, The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 198.

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during the message (it actually happened two times in my ministry)? Does he go and finish

the message or stop and give an invitation? What if during the delivery different things

come to mind, such as a supporting passage of the Scripture, an appropriate illustration, or

an additional thought? How should I proceed? When the preacher depends on the Holy

Spirit in delivery, the Holy Spirit can help in adapting and adjusting to each unique occasion.

The second major challenge in delivery has been in relation to the public invitation.

While the analysis of the differences of opinion in relation to the public invitation is beyond

the scope of this article, my personal conviction is that a biblical message demands a call for

action. Vines and Shaddix listed and discussed the following models of calling for a

response to the message: verbal appeal, physical relocation, post‑meeting ministry, written

record, physical gesture, and a multiple approach.16 In my opinion, the preacher must

prepare the invitation including the model of response beforehand. In my earlier ministry, I

would use the same model that the Holy Spirit empowered me to prepare in advance. As I

became more comfortable in multiple models of public invitation, even though I sought the

leading of the Holy Spirit in regard to the model of the invitation in advance, I allowed Him

to change the model if necessary at the moment of delivery. Only when the preacher

depends on the Holy Spirit at the moment of delivery, can he overcome the challenge of

whether or not to go ahead with a prepared model of public invitation at the moment of

delivery.

Another challenge in delivery has been the nature of an appeal in the invitation.

Personally, I contend that every message, regardless of the passage, should include an

evangelistic appeal. Some messages that the Holy Spirit empowers the preacher to prepare

may dictate an appeal slanted more toward discipleship, but other messages may have more

of an evangelistic orientation. Regardless of the orientation of the appeal chosen for the

message in advance, the preacher must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in delivery. I have

experienced times when I prepared a message with a discipleship appeal in mind; however,

the Holy Spirit led me toward a more evangelistic appeal during delivery. When the preacher

depends on the Holy Spirit in preparation as well as delivery, He assists the preacher in the

selection of the appeal during the public invitation.

When the substance of the message is the Word of God and the focus of the

message is Jesus Christ, and when the anointing of the Holy Spirit is present, the message

achieves its goal as a demonstration of the Spirit and power. When the preacher depends

on the Holy Spirit, He will not only enable the preparation of the content, model, and appeal

of the public invitation but God may lead the preacher to deviate from the previously

prepared material through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit and the People

When the preacher depends on the Holy Spirit in his daily life, preparation, and

delivery of the message, he should be aware of the Holy Spirits role among the audience.

Understanding how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers and unbelievers enhances

16Vines and Shaddix, 213‑15.

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our dependance on Him for His work among the audience. Anointed preaching is not

possible without the work of the Holy Spirit among the audience.

When the preacher stands before the people to proclaim Gods Word, he should

pray that the lost who are present may receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The Bible

teaches us that the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of all lost people (John 16: 7‑10). I have

found comfort in knowing that before I speak to unbelievers about Jesus, the Holy Spirit has

already been working in their lives. The Holy Spirit may have spoken to them through

general revelation or Scripture. The Holy Spirit may have provided people who witnessed to

them, or He may have allowed them to be more sensitive to spiritual realities. A helpful tool

for illustrating this truth is the Spider Principle.17 The work of the Holy Spirit is to create a

web that draws people to salvation. The Holy Spirit connects our message to that of other

believers, circumstances, general revelation through nature, and specific revelation through

the Word of God. When the preacher proclaims Gods Word to unbelievers, he is adding

another strand to the web that the Holy Spirit uses to draw the unbeliever to faith in Christ.

The Holy Spirit brings conviction (John 16: 8) and a new birth (John 3: 1‑6) to the

unbeliever. I did not realize until I was believer in Christ for several years that I could not

bring about conviction in the lives of the lost. My role is not to bring conviction to the lost;

that role is reserved for the Holy Spirit. Recently at my local church, several individuals

professed Christ publically after the message. An individual came to me and said, Pastor,

thank you for saving those souls! I had to explain to the person that I could not save

anyone; God is the one who saves and brings conviction and a new birth through the Holy

Spirit. Even with the greatest of persuasive presentations and the most flamboyant of

personalities no one can be brought under true conviction and to an authentic new birth

without the Holy Spirit. My responsibility as a preacher is not to convict an individual or

even to bring him or her to a point of decision; that is the role of the Holy Spirit. My

responsibility is to proclaim Gods Word faithfully.

In addition, I must be aware that the unbeliever can resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:

51). Preachers tend to get discouraged when unbelievers fail to receive Christ. The preacher

must recognize that while God is willing to bring conviction and new birth through the Holy

Spirit, the unbeliever can resist the work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. We are not to

take it personally. The unbeliever is not rejecting us but the message of Christ and the work

of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.

When the preacher proclaims the Bible, the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of the

unbelievers as well as believers. The Holy Spirit has been described in Romans 1:4 as the

Spirit of holiness and in 1 John 1:20 as the Holy One. His objective is to generate

holiness, and His ultimate work is to make believers into a holy people, holy as the children

of God.18 The Holy Spirit brings about holiness to believers through the process of

sanctification (1 Corinthians 6:11) using Gods Word in the process (John 17:17). The

17Charles Kelley, Adult Roman Road Witnessing Training Teachers Guide (Nashville:

Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1993), 8.

18D. Martyn Lloyd‑Jones, God the Holy Spirit (Wheaton: Crossway, 1997), 8.

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preacher must pray that God will use the message to generate holiness in his audience

through the process of sanctification.

Just as the preacher is aware of the Holy Spirit as an agent of illumination in his

preparation, he must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as the agent of illumination of biblical

truth among believers in the audience. Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the believers

in the audience will not be able to fully comprehend the message and act upon it. In my

preaching ministry, I have prayed for the illumination of the Holy Spirit among the people to

whom I was attempting to communicate biblical truths.

Just as the preacher depends on the Holy Spirit in his daily life, his prayer should be

that the message results the cultivation of a greater dependence on the Holy Spirit in the

lives of the believers. I have prayed that, as a result of the message, the believers will depend

on the Holy Spirit for continual gratitude of what God had done for them at conversion and

willful obedience to the four commandments in relation to the Holy Spirit: not to quench

and not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and to be filled with and to walk with the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is essential to the task of preaching. When the preacher is aware of

the Holy Spirits indwelling, sealing, baptism, discernment with spiritual gifts, he should be

motivated to obey the four commandments described in this article. As the preacher

depends on the Holy Spirit in his life, he needs to rely on Him in preparation for

proclamation. The preacher ought to remember that He serves as the agent of illumination

of biblical truths, He provides direction to how the preacher can plan messages in advance,

and He assists the preacher in responding to possible catastrophic events.

Powerful delivery is not possible without the anointing of the Holy Spirit which

takes place in the context of the proper goal, substance, and focus of preaching. When the

preacher depends on the Holy Spirit in delivery, he is able to adjust to unpredictable factors

surrounding the preaching event, and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in invitation.

Examination of the role of the Holy Spirit in proclamation is not complete without

understanding that the Holy Sprit is at work among the audience at the moment of delivery

bringing the lost to new birth and the believers to greater holiness through the process of

sanctification.

Several years ago, I preached a series of messages on the Holy Spirit at the church

where I served as pastor. In my preparation for the messages, I re‑read Billy Grahams book

on the Holy Spirit and came across a quote that is now prominently copied in my Bible:

Resist not His incoming; grieve not His indwelling; quench not His outgoing. Open to

Him as the Incomer; please Him as the Indweller; obey Him as the Outgoer in His

testimony of things concerning Christ.19 The reason I wrote this quote in my Bible was to

remind me of the reality of the Holy Spirit in my daily life and the necessity of my continual

reliance on Him for preparation and delivery of Gods Word, and for the response among

the people that He allows me to address.

19Billy Graham, The Holy Spirit (Waco, TX: Word, 1978), 130.

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Apologizing to Postmoderns: Developing an Effective Apologetic for Contemporary Gospel Preaching Dr. W. Michael Miller

Apologizing To Postmoderns:

Developing An Effective Apologetic For

Contemporary Gospel Preaching

Dr. W. Michael Miller

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Introduction

irst Peter 3:15 admonishes believers always to be prepared to make a defense of the

Gospel that gives hope. With that in mind, much has been written to equip Christians

to defend our faithto the point that the field of apologetics has developed into an

independent discipline. A number of volumes have also been published concerning the

preaching of the Gospel to unbelievers and skeptics. The question before us today,

however, concerns the need to synthesize the two, and to do so in a way that will most

effectively communicate and defend the Gospel to a contemporary audience. How are we as

preachers faithfully to proclaim the life‑changing message of Jesus Christ to the mediasaturated,

pluralistic, skeptical culture in which we find ourselves immersed today?

In order effectively to communicate the Gospel to people in any given culture, it is

necessary to understand the philosophical and sociological undercurrents influencing the

thought patterns of that culture. And it is necessary to speak their language. While no one

could argue that the Judeo‑Christian tradition has not had major effects on the West, the

reality also exists that significant changes have taken place over the last century that have

affected the way people think and perceive the world. The questions arise, then, as to how

society has come to the place in which it now finds itself, and how the church is to respond

to the changes that have taken place. Has culture changed to the point that the manner in

which the faith is defended also needs to change? And if so, what changes are necessary?

How Did We Get Here?

A time once existed in which most cultures were dominated by what is now referred

to as premodernism. A premodern culture was marked by little or no diversity or social

change. People shared the same values, traditions, and beliefs, and while some such societies

still exist in remote regions of the world, those conditions are, especially in the West, rare.1

Today, pluralism, diversity, and constant change are the norm. Western society is now

saturated in what is most commonly referred to as a postmodern culture, the diametrical

1Douglas Groothuis, Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of

Postmodernism (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 32.

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opposite of premodernism, but the shift in sociology and worldview was far from

instantaneous (nor is it uniformly complete).

Until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Western culture was predominately a

premodern enterprise dominated by the Roman church. However, when the leaders of the

Protestant Reformation took their stand against the establishment, one inevitable result was

a newfound willingness to question authority. While that in itself was not altogether

negative, the reality was that Christianity (which was defined as the Roman church) as a

whole had now been destabilized, and the voice of moral objectivity had been undermined.2

In a society where the questioning of accepted norms was being discouraged, questioning

now became the norm, as no person or institution had exclusive claims to the truth.

At the same time, the Renaissance was taking shape. It is hard now to see just how

much one affected the other, but it is clear that they in many ways went hand‑in‑hand. The

term Renaissance is French for rebirth or revival, and the period is so called because

of the rebirth of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition as well as a renewed emphasis on

learning following the Dark Ages.3 As the Reformation was calling for a biblically based

church, Renaissance thinkers were striving to synthesize Greek and Christian thought. The

newfound trend of questioning the over all status‑quo of society accelerated the shift away

from the blind acceptance of authority toward an emphasis on human values and autonomy.

The authority of the church, and therefore of the Bible, had officially been undercut.4 The

church was no longer the source of truth; the individual was. This is what is now referred to

as the beginnings of humanism.

On the heels of the Renaissance, in the mid seventeenth century, came the

Enlightenment. While the Renaissance undermined the authority of the church and

opened the door for modernist thinking, the Enlightenment is seen as the actual beachhead

of modernism.5 Also called the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment was characterized by a

trend toward rationalism. With a de‑emphasis and distrust of the concept of divine

revelation, rationalists depended on logic, empirical evidence, and scientific discovery in their

search for objective truth. Most believed that the natural world held the keys to ultimate

reality, and that the essence of reality could only be unlocked through a thorough knowledge

of the natural world.6 As one person described it, Enlightenment thinkers presumed that

2Ibid., 34.

3Stanley J. Grenz, A Primer on Postmodernism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 58.

4Baker, Summary of Christian History, 191, makes a good case that this shift actually

aided the Reformation by opening peoples minds to the idea of questioning the authority of

the Pope.

5Groothuis, Truth Decay, 35. Grenz says, The Renaissance laid the foundation for

the modern mentality, but it did not erect the superstructure of modernity (Grenz, Primer,

60).

6Groothuis, Truth Decay, 36. Grenz, Primer, 61.

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there existed a single correct mode of representation which, if we could uncover it (and this

was what scientific and mathematical endeavors were all about), would provide the means to

Enlightenment ends.7 And what were those ends? Simply put, the truth.

This is basically the mindset, spurred on by an onslaught of new scientific discoveries

and theories of the nineteenth century that characterizes modernism. The modernist

believes that truth exists, that there are objective standards for reality and morality, and that

those standards can be found in the natural world. Therefore, modernism rejects any

concept of divine revelation; faith and reason are seen as diametrically opposed to one

another. This was the predominate line of thinking, at least until the 1950's, that fueled the

rise in evidentiary apologetics.8 After all, if enough objective, empirical evidence could be

produced to substantiate the claims of Scripture, then the apologetic task would be

complete.

Where Are We Now?

Beginning in the 1950s a different philosophy started emergingthe philosophy of

postmodernism. It is important to note, however, that some of its most important ideas

were not entirely new to the twentieth century. In the latter part of the nineteenth century,

Friedrich Nietzsche declared the death of God, and he followed suit with a line of

reasoning which would affect virtually every area of life. Nietzsche was critical of the

modernist quest for universal truth and moral absolutes, arguing that, since those were

basically religious concepts, and since religion had been debunked as a viable means of

authority, the whole concepts of truth and meaning had no basis. Without God there was

no absolute or foundational source of moral law because there was no objective point of

reference. This gave birth to existentialismthe view that human existence, set within

individual contexts, was all there was or could be to reality. Truth, along with God, was

dead to the existentialist.9

Though Nietzsches views did not gain a solid footing initially, the ideas he suggested

began to take birth in the latter half of the twentieth century, when postmodernism began to

take shape. The new philosophy rejected the most basic tenet of modernist thought

namely that objective truth could be known. While, as one anthropologist explains, the

modernist does not believe in the availability of a substantive, final, world‑transcending

7David Harvey, The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural

Change (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 27‑28.

8The term evidentiary apologetics refers to any form of apologetics that depends

on empirical evidences to prove, support, or give credibility to any of the truth‑claims of the

faith.

9Groothuis identifies Nietzsche as the most likely candidate to be named the one

philosopher who marks the transition from modernism to postmodernism (Groothuis,

Truth Decay, 37).

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Revelation, he does believe in the existence of knowledge which transcends culture.10 The

postmodernist rejects all claims to ultimate transcendent truth, claiming instead that ones

own personal experience is all anyone can ever really know.11 Doug Groothuis states that to

the postmodern, the very idea of absolute, objective and universal truth is considered

implausible, held in open contempt or not even seriously considered.12

This new emphasis on subjectivism is a defining characteristic of postmodernism. In

fact, the postmodernist would say that the only truth there is (not defined as objective truth)

is whatever one determines to be truth, based on ones own culture and perception.13

Indeed it would seem that the primary difference between modernism and postmodernism is

the difference between absolutism and relativism.14 As J. I. Packer put it, the postmodernist

says, What I feel is all that counts because what I feel is all there is.15

Many factors have led to the rise and acceptance of postmodernism, including but

not limited to the following: (1) Modernism failed to provide all of lifes answers through

knowledge and technological mastery. (2) Pluralism lends itself to the unacceptability of one

true religion. (3) Diversity has blurred the lines, making all lifestyles and values equally valid.

(4) Language is believed to be a human creation, thus not representing reality. (5) Verifiable

evidence cannot objectively determine truth.16 These all represent a frustration among

postmoderns, who have in essence given up on Truth itself. Therefore, how must preachers

respond in order most effectively to communicate the truth claims of Christianity? Will the

same methods used in a modern context work in a postmodern context? Or is a shift in

apologetics in order?

Preaching to the Times:

A New Religion or a New Kind of Language?

Postmodernism presents a significant shift in thinking in western culture. The

modernist mindset, believing in the existence of objective truth which could be discovered

10Ernest Gellner, Postmodernism, Reason, and Religion (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75‑

76.

11Grenz, Primer, 83.

12Groothuis, Truth Decay, 22.

13David L. Goetz, The Riddle of Our Postmodern Culture: What Is

Postmodernism? Should We Even Care? Leadership 18 (1997): 54.

14F. LeRon Shults, Sturctures of Rationality in Science and Theology: Overcoming

the Postmodern Dilemma, Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith 49 (1997): 228‑36.

15J. I. Packer, as quoted in Goetz, Riddle, 56.

16Ibid., 26‑31. Terence E. Fretheim, The Bible as Word of God: In a Postmodern Age

(Minneapolis: Westminster, 1998), 83‑84

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through empirical evidences, is no longer prevalent. This is not to say that modernism has

ceased to exist. Indeed, there are many factors that can determine a persons worldview.

For example, elderly people and people raised in rural settings further removed from the

influences of postmodern ideology will likely have a more modern worldview than those in

their twenties raised in cities (particularly cities outside of the Bible Belt). Also, people

with scientific backgrounds might be more influenced by empirical evidence than someone

with a liberal arts degree, and those educated in liberal, secular universities might tend more

toward relativism than those with only a high school education or those educated in more

conservative private institutions. Nevertheless, that postmodernism has significantly

transformed the contemporary worldview is undeniable.

In addition, while the contemporary pastor in a more traditional setting might think

that his converted congregants are not in need of apologeticsor at the very least, that they

still see the world through modernist lenses that filter out all the gray areasnothing could be

farther from the truth. Calvin Miller notes that people who attend church have no forum

for expressing their diverse views and none are given polygraph tests to be sure they agree

with creeds. But many of them dont.17 Further, in his book Preaching to a Postmodern World,

Graham Johnston contends that postmodernism is shared by those folks who fill church

sanctuaries each Sunday.18 To assume that contemporary pews are filled with committed

believers who unquestionably accept our confessional statements and everything we

preachers say would be to exhibit a naiveté that will leave our listeners wondering if we really

even understand who they are.

The challenge, then, is for the preacher today to lean to understand his context.

Who exactly are the members of his audience, and how do they think? Craig Loscalzo

acknowledges the difficulty in trying concretely to define postmodernism. After all, one

characteristic of postmodernism is its intentional willingness not to objectify anything.19

How can the church communicate effectively to those who reject modernisms rationalism

and objectivity? The difficulty is in presenting the exclusive truth‑claims and the call to the

lordship of Christ to those who embrace relativism and embody suspicion. Yet, Loscalzo

says, Only a pulpit that identifies with the milieu of the time will be heard over the babble

of other voices demanding peoples attention.20 Therefore, the effective preacher must

learn to connect with his listeners, and to do so will require him to reclaim the apologetic

role of the pulpit for the cause of the Christian faith.21

17Calvin Miller, Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books,

2006), 44.

18Graham Johnston, Preaching to a Postmodern World (Grand Rapids: Baker Books,

2001), 9.

19Craig Loscalzo, Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World (Downers

Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 26.

20Loscalzo, 20.

21Ibid., 23.

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In order to apologize in a postmodern climate, Loscalzo contends that certain

elements need to be present in apologetic preaching. Stories, or image‑rich narratives will

help present the Gospel and make it clear.22 The preacher must also provide theological

content. Not to do so ranks paramount to ministerial malpractice and should not be

tolerated.23 In addition, preachers must be willing to take on rival systems, particularly

with respect to providing answers to questions of theodicy, sin, salvation, and other issues

which can become obstacles to faith.24 Loscalzo also contends that to reach the

postmodern, as opposed to the modernist, preaching must contain an element of mystery

and transcendence, not trying to provide all the answers with raw data and technology.25

Preachers need to offer the hope of the Gospel26 and the certainty of truth, even though

postmoderns reject the notion of objective truth.27 Ultimately, however, the greatest

necessity in apologetic preaching is the preaching of Jesus Christ. The focus of preaching is

not a church or a theological system, but the person of Jesus Christ Himself, so the

apologetic preacher must explain to the world the who and the why of Jesus the Christ.

In Preaching to a Postmodern World, Johnston acknowledges that even within the

church, many people hold to a postmodern worldview. Therefore, he encourages the

biblical expositor to learn to communicate in such a way as to connect with his

contemporary listeners.28 Even in the pew on Sunday, he contends, there will be skeptics, so

he issues a strong call for pulpit apologetics. He defines apologetic preaching as biblical

preaching that grapples with doubts, unpacks Christian assumptions, and contemplates the

unbelief of the skeptic.29 The preacher who has still not grasped the most common

differences between modernity and postmodernity will have a difficult time communicating

with contemporary Christians, much less those who have yet to accept the basic claims of

the faith.

22Ibid., 22. Loscalzo is not necessarily advocating a narrative form of preaching as

much as he is contending for the use of narratives during the course of preaching, regardless

of the specific form or style of the sermon.

23Loscalzo, 25. He states, Whether by intentional design or by default we pastors

have relegated our task of being a theologian to some unknown entity while we spend our

energy on matters that someone else in the church could better handle,

24Loscalzo, 26‑27.

25Ibid., 29.

26Ibid., 54.

27Ibid., 84.

28Johnston, 9.

29Ibid., 82.

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In a compilation work called Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns, Zacharias sums

up the problem faced in Gospel preaching today with the question, How do we

communicate the gospel to a generation that hears with its eyes and thinks with its

feelings?30 Despite the overwhelming call to answer that challenge with purely

technological and visual means, however, Zacharias displays a faith in the written Word of

God, bemoaning the loss of linguistic strength in our time, urging the preacher not to

abandon the preaching of that Word.31

In answer to the question of how truth is communicated today, Zacharias provides

five points for the evangelistic preacher to consider. First, because of the lack of confidence

in any kind of authority, postmodernism has cleared the playing field. Confidence has

become so scarce that there is a deep spiritual hunger for something solid in which to

believe.32 This provides an enormous opportunity for the claims of the Gospel.33 Second,

while classical techniques dont work anymore, there is just enough of the modern

worldview left so that reason still has a point of entry. Care should be taken not to engage

in an overdose of argumentation, but rational discussion and truth assertions need not be

cast aside 34.

Third, postmoderns long for community, and the gospel message that culminates in

worship . . . brings coherence within the community of believers. The church provides

something unique in that a worshiping community binds [our] diversity . . . and brings us

together into a corporate expression of worship, which is one of the most powerful

appeals to the postmodern mind.35

Fourth, he says, we must be observant of Gods sovereign intervention in

history. In other words, we need to seize upon local, national, or global events that will

provide opportunity for the Gospel. Certain events cause people to question and search,

and the effective evangelistic preacher will speak truth into those situations, providing

answers for the longing soul. Finally, postmoderns are exhausted [by] this indulgent

culture. Evangelistic preaching does not need to make promises of ease, but be honest

30Ravi Zacharias, in Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand

Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 26.

31Ibid., 43.

32See also, Ravi Zacharias, Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian

Message (Nashville: Word, 2000): Philosophically, you can believe anything. . . . Morally, you

can practice anything. . . . Religiously, you can hold to anything (vii).

33Zacharias, Telling the Truth, 26.

34Ibid., 27.

35Ibid., 27.

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about the cost of following Christ.36 This concept contradicts the pragmatism employed by

so many preachers and evangelists today, but Zacharias argues that this is the kind of

preaching that will resonate with the postmodern.

In the same work, Colin Smith contends for the centrality of Jesus Christ in

preaching to postmoderns, and not just disconnected truths about peace or fulfillment or

family life.37 Even though those things certainly will be spoken of, every application

presented must be connected to the person and work of Jesus Christ. He sees Jesus as

central to Scripture, to preaching, and to the Gospel, so any true Christian preaching

ultimately must be focused on Him. In the current zeitgeist, pragmatism dominates many

pulpits, but even for the contemporary unbeliever, the preacher must not forget that his task

is to proclaim Jesus Christ to all who hear.38

A song currently being played at your local Starbucks gives voice to the heart cry of

contemporary culture:

Give me some new religion;

Something that I can feel.

Give me some new tomorrow;

Bring it on and make it real.

Drown it in sweet forgiveness;

Come on, baby, to my life.39

The Gospel preacher, however, will recognize that a new religion is not what people are

longing for. Instead, it is the very real offer of a new tomorrow and the sweet forgiveness

that is only available in Jesus Christ. Give me Jesus, is their plea, but we must first learn

how to understand and speak their language if we are to give them what they need.

Conclusion

The last sixty years have seen some dramatic shifts in culture. The contemporary

audience is more skeptical today, pluralism is prevalent, and truth is seen as subjective. A

significant number of our listeners, though perhaps still possessing some remnants of

modernist thought, are steeped in a postmodern worldview. Because of that, preachers

seeking to reach unbelievers with the Gospel must endeavor to understand the foundations

36Ibid., 27‑28.

37Colin Smith, in Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand

Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 112.

38John R. W. Stott, in Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982: the church has lost its confidence in the Gospel, and that it

must reclaim that confidence. Preachers do not need to find an adequate or attractive

substitute, as there really is none (83‑85).

39New Religion. Words by Alex Dickson. Recorded by Alice Smith.

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and ramifications of postmodern thought. That understanding should inform the

proclamation of the Gospelnot the Gospel itself, but the substance of the argumentation

used. There have always been skeptics, but the skepticism of today questions the veracity of

the Bible and even the historical reality of Jesus. Therefore, when the truth claims of the

Gospel are presented, we will need to develop an apologetic for defending those claims that

arises from an understanding of how objective truth is viewed by a contemporary audience.

As Loscalzo says, In the current climate of pluralism and relativismwhat one might call a

neopagan culturethe ground for evangelism will have to be properly furrowed and prepared

by effective apologetics.40

The shift in thinking demands a shift in apologetic method from the manner of that

used in a modernist culture, however. Evidentiary apologetics will be ineffective with an

audience that places no value in empirical data. Subjectivism rules the day. As Ravi

Zacharias says, the contemporary generation hears with its eyes and thinks with its

feelings.41 Therefore, we must learn to use stories, both contemporary and historical, that

will connect with the listeners on an emotional level. This does not mean, however, that

preachers of the Gospel should shrink from declaring the truth‑claims of Scripture. Instead,

there are certain elements that need to be present in the apologetic used in contemporary

evangelistic preaching.

To begin with, Jesus Christ must be proclaimed as the Son of God and unique Savior

of the World. He is not one god among many. He is the only God, and to fail to proclaim

Him as such is to fail to proclaim the Gospel. Similarly, even though postmodern listeners

are skeptical of absolute truth‑claims, the Christian faith is based on them, and in an age

when nothing is certain, the preacher of the Gospel has the opportunity to be the one

person in the community to provide solid answers to a confused generation.

When developing an apologetic for preaching, however, preachers need not pretend

to know all the answers or to be able to answer lifes most difficult questions with simple

propositions. Postmoderns are not looking for pat answers, but they are comfortable with

mystery. Therefore, when there is mysterywhen the questions being raised are beyond

knowingan effective contemporary apologetic will embrace that mystery rather than try to

dispel it.

In addition, though it is politically incorrect to criticize most belief systems and

philosophies today, evangelistic preachers must confront the errors of the day. This is done

by addressing the underlying assumptionsthe foundational presuppositionsand showing,

not only the inherent flaws, but also the superiority of the Christian faith. Preachers need to

be able to explain to their listeners how Christianity is the only faith system that can meet

their deepest needs and how all other systems consistently fail to do so. A word of caution,

however, is that the preacher must never be seen as arrogant or uncaring, but he should

40Loscalzo, 125.

41Zacharias, Telling the Truth, 82.

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present his argument with gentleness and humility, because, as Zacharias says, We are living

in a time when sensitivities are at the surface.42

Finally, because the postmodern is typically wary of superficiality and materialism,

and because he frequently sees Christianity as making shallow external promises, the Gospel

should not be presented as a means to leisure or luxury. Honesty and transparency are

important to the postmodern, so the preacher that connects is the one who is forthright in

communicating the costs of following Christ and the struggles of discipleship. Since the

Gospel itself makes no promises of ease, neither should the Gospel preacher.

Contemporary apologetics need not enhance the Gospel to make it more pleasing, but

should rather preach Jesus as the One who lays claim to the entire life of His follower and

bids him take up his cross.

42Zacharias, Jesus Among Other Gods, vii.

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Humor in Preaching: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Pulpit Dr. Jerry Barlow & Dr. Bradley Rushing

Humor In Preaching: A Funny Thing

Happened On The Way To The Pulpit. . . .

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&

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Introduction

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was known at times to entice great roars of laughter from

his preaching. Some observers criticized such laughter and his use of humor in

preaching as irreverent. However, Spurgeon stated, If my critics only knew how much I

held back, they would commend me.1

Is humor appropriate and useful in preaching? This paper presents selected

perspectives on using humor in preaching, discusses three major theories about humor and

how it functions to make people laugh, and offers suggestions on how preachers can use

humor in sermons from a traditional homiletic.

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on

Using Humor in Preaching

One of the first homileticians to voice an opinion on the subject of humor in

preaching was Alexandre Vinet. He dismissed the usefulness of humor in preaching saying,

The pretence [sic] of correcting morals by comedy is vain. If the use of ridicule may be

admitted in familiar conversation or in a book, it is out of place in an assembly where grave

subjects are treated.2 Austin Phelps agreed with this view fearing that the use of humor in a

sermon would degrade the Bible.3 T. Harwood Pattison also rejected the idea of using

1 Thielicke, Helmut. Encounter with Spurgeon, trans. by John W. Doberstein.

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 26.

2Alexandre Vinet, Homiletics: Or the Theory of Preaching, trans. and ed. by Thomas H.

Skinner. (New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1854), 214.

3Austin Phelps, The Theory of Preaching (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1882),

198‑99.

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humor in the pulpit: Religion is too severe a matter to be treated in a trivial or jesting spirit.

Figures of speech may be in place in a platform speech which are not to be tolerated in a

sermon.4 In a more contemporary work, John Piper rejected any notion of humor in the

pulpit contending that laughter promotes an atmosphere, which hinders revival.5

Phillips Brooks in Lectures on Preaching was one of the first homileticians to note the

appropriateness of humor in preaching by responding to the critics who viewed humor as

frivolous: The smile that is stirred by the true humor and the smile that comes from mere

tickling of the fancy are as different from one another as the tears that sorrow forces from

the soul are from the tears that you compel a man to shed by pinching him.6

James Burrell was one of the few homileticians to devote a chapter to humor in his

homiletical textbook, The Sermon: Its Construction and Delivery.7 Burrell defended his position by

noting the use of humor by great preachers such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Henry Ward

Beecher, and Dwight L. Moody. Burrell noted that preachers should use humor with a

purpose and not merely for entertainment: The court jester has his place; but Christ=s

fishermen have little use for cap and bells.8 Alfred Garvie promoted the use of humor in

the pulpit on the grounds that it is a good gift from God.9 He also remarked, Worse things

may be heard in a church than a laugh.10

Charles Brown classified humor as one of the three lighter elements of a sermon.

In his view, tasteful humor was effective in enabling the congregation to identify with the

speaker=s humanity, holding attention, providing a refreshing mental break, and increasing

the comprehension of a truth on the mind of the hearer.11 John Broadus also favored the use

of humor in preaching as long as it was so interconnected to the message of the preacher

4T. Harwood Pattison, The Making of the Sermon: For the Classroom and the Study

(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1900), 286.

5John Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 56.

6Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1902), 57.

7David James Burrell, The Sermon: Its Construction and Delivery (New York: Fleming H.

Revell, 1913), 233‑38.

8Ibid., 237‑38.

9Alfred Garvie, The Christian Preacher (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 416.

10Alfred Garvie, A Guide to Preachers (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1907),

234.

11Charles Reynolds Brown, The Art of Preaching (New York: The Macmillan Company,

1922), 135‑42.

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and his personality that the humor seemed natural and unforced.12 Webb Garrison devoted

an entire chapter to humor in his work, The Preacher and His Audience. He asserted that humor

is a powerfully persuasive device: It is an affront to the God whom we serve to neglect the

skillful use of humor in our preaching.13

A subsection of recent homileticians support the use of humor in preaching. Harold

Bryson advocated humor based on its practical benefits: If humor can help illumine and

impact people, it can be valuable. But if humor is used to entertain or to display cleverness, it

is entirely out of place.14 John Stott conjectured, So humour is legitimate. Nevertheless, we

have to be sparing in our use of it and judicious in the topics we select for laughter.15

Warren Wiersbie offered one guideline: If humor is natural to the preacher, then it should

be used in preaching; but one must never >import= jokes just to make the congregation

laugh.16 Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix described the purpose of humor in the pulpit as not

to get laughs but to drive home a point in an entertaining way.17 Dave Stone identified the

engaging humorist as a dominant style of communication. He noted concerning humor in

preaching, Appropriate humor, strategically placed, can be like a breath of fresh air to a

person who=s been underwater for a minute.18

A limited number of homiletical texts have been written that deal exclusively with

homiletical humor. Doug Adams wrote Humor in the American Pulpit, which traced the use of

humor and the motivation for its use from George Whitefield through Henry Ward Beecher.

James Heflins 1974 dissertation offered a broad overview of humor and its role in the

sermon derived from communication theory. In his work Humor in Preaching, John Drakeford

lightly treated a number of issues concerning humor. James Barnette advanced the field with

his 1992 dissertation Humor in Preaching: The Contribution of Psychological and Sociological Research.

Joseph Webb digressed from classical homiletical theory to develop a philosophy of

12John Broadus, A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, 2d ed., revised by

Edwin Charles Dargan (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1926), 26.

13Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher and His Audience (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell

Company, 1954), 192.

14Harold T. Bryson, Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching through a Book of the Bible

(Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 395‑96.

15John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century

(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman=s Publishing Company, 1982), 288.

16Warren Wiersbe, Preaching and Teaching with Imagination (Grand Rapids: Baker Books,

1994), 275.

17Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository

Sermons (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 246.

18Dave Stone, Refining Your Style: Learning from Respected Communicators (Loveland, CO:

Group, 2004), 83.

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preaching based on the philosophy of stand‑up comedy in his work Comedy and Preaching. A

significant work recently completed on the subject is Michael Butzbergers Doctor of

Ministry project entitled Humor as a Communication Tool in Preaching. He provided a theological

and theoretical rationale for using humor in preaching. Butzberger covered a wide range of

topics related to humor in preaching, such as examples of humor in the Bible; benefits of

humor in life and communication; and helpful suggestions on using humor in the pulpit.

One of the authors of this paper recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation in this area entitled

Toward A Methodology Which Equips Pastors To Use Humor Intentionally In Preaching.

Major Theories about Humor

Three major theories have emerged from humor research to explain the existence of

humor, why people laugh, and the motivation for using humor. These theories include the

superiority theory, incongruity theory, and relief theory. While each theory seeks to account

for all instances of humor, many humor theorists note that none of these three main theories

is adequate to provide a general theory of laughter. Nevertheless, each theory provides a

helpful framework for understanding the existence of humor and laughter.

Superiority Theory

The superiority theory states that laughter emerges as an expression of a person=s

feelings of superiority over other people.19. One may be seen as comical when he or she is

viewed as inadequate according to a set of agreed‑upon group or societal criteria.20

Morreall called the superiority theory the oldest, and probably still most widespread theory

of humor.21

Support for the superiority theory goes back to the writings of Plato and Aristotle,

who both believed that laughter was a form of derision and may hurt the character of the

person causing the laughter. Plato warned of the danger of comedies having a morally

corrupting effect on a person.22 Aristotle did not completely condemn a sense of humor, but

he promoted moderation. He wrote, Those who carry humor to excess are thought to be

vulgar buffoons. They try to be funny at any cost and aim more at raising a laugh than at

saying what is proper and at avoiding pain to the butt of their jokes.23

19John Morreall, Taking Laughter Seriously (Albany: State University of New York

Press, 1983), 4.

20O.H. Lynch, Humorous Communication: Finding a Place for Humor in

Communication Research. Communication Theory 12 (November 2002): 426.

21Morreall, 4.

22Ibid., 5.

23Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, vols. 4, 8. Quoted in John Moreall, 5.

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The conception of the superiority theory is attributed to the seventeenth‑century

philosopher Thomas Hobbes who stated, The passion of laughter is nothing else but

sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by

comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own.24 Charles Gruner expounded

upon Hobbes=s statement by noting that the two elements sudden and glory are the

essentials for evoking laughter.25

Anthony Ludovici expanded Hobbes theory of sudden glory by explaining all

laughter as a product of a person=s feeling of superior adaptation. He explained, We

laugh when we feel that our adaptation to life is superior. It may be a purely subjective state

unprovoked by any external object, or it may be a state of mind excited by a comparison, as

when we laugh at a schoolboy howler. Or it may be a bluff laugh, that is to say, pretended

expression of superior adaptation when one is really feeling inferior.26 Ludovici pointed to

the natural laughter of children at others with physical, mental, and cultural maladaptations

as an illustration of this phenomenon.27

Albert Rapp also traced laughter back to hostile origins. Rapp suggested that laughter

had its roots in the primitive self. He attributed the source of all modern forms of wit and

humor to the roar of triumph in the ancient jungle duel.28

Humor theorists have identified benefits of superiority humor. Gruner argued that it

actually lessens aggressive behavior by permitting a great deal of emotional expression that

would otherwise have to remain unexpressed and bottled up inside us or else released in

less socially accepted ways.29 Feinberg agreed, noting that humor provides a vicarious form

of aggression to relieve some of the accumulated tensions of modern society.30 Instances of

superiority humor also serve as social correctives. Meyer observed that one of the functions

of the royal fool was to teach discipline by laughter: Foolish antics were laughed at to show

that such behaviors or beliefs were unacceptable in serious society.31 Meyer noted also that

24Thomas Hobbes, Human Nature, The English Works, vol. 4. William Molesworth,

ed. (London: Bohn, 1840), 46.

25Charles Gruner, Understanding Laughter: The Workings of Wit and Humor (Chicago:

Nelson‑Hall, 1978), 30.

26Anthony Ludovici, The Secret of Laughter (New York: Viking Press, 1933), 62.

27Ibid., 100‑03.

28Albert Rapp, The Origins of Wit and Humor (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1951), 21.

29Gruner, 35.

30Leonard Feinberg, The Secret of Humor (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978), 25.

31John Meyer, Humor as Double‑Edged Sword: Four Functions of Humor in

Communication. Communication Theory 10 (August 2000): 314.

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superiority humor may build group unity: Laughing at faulty behavior can also reinforce

unity among group members, as a feeling of superiority over those being ridiculed can

coexist with a feeling of belonging.32

Incongruity Theory

The incongruity theory provides the perspective that people laugh at what surprises

them, is unexpected, or is odd in a nonthreatening way.33 Laughter is placed in the realm of

the cognitive domain and thought to depend on one=s ability to recognize that something is

inconsistent with the expected rational nature of the perceived environment.34 When people

experience what does not fit into normal expected patterns, incongruence occurs, and they

experience laughter. Morreall explained, We live in an orderly world, where we have come

to expect certain patterns among things, their properties, events, etc. We laugh when we

experience something that does not fit these patterns. As Pascal put it, Nothing produces

laughter more than a surprising disproportion between that which one expects and that

which one sees.35 The origins of the incongruity theory can be traced back to the

eighteenth‑century philosopher Immanuel Kant who wrote, Whatever is to arouse lively,

convulsive laughter must contain something absurd (hence something that the

understanding cannot like for its own sake.) Laughter is an affect that arises if a tense expectation is

transformed into nothing.36 Such an occurrence can be observed when a joke builds

expectations and then addresses them with nonsense. People experiencing the joke are left

with little response but to laugh.37

In his essay entitled Laughter, Henri Bergson noted that incongruity depends on a

duality of meaning within a common situation: A situation is invariably comic when it

belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of

being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time.38 Lynch described

Bergson=s essay as a landmark for humor theory and explained that Bergson understood

incongruity humor as both situationally and relationally driven.39 Helmuth Plessner built

32Ibid., 315.

33Ibid., 313.

34Lynch, 428.

35Morreall, 15‑16.

36Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement trans. by Werner S. Pluhar. (Indianapolis:

Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 203.

37Lynch, 428.

38Henri Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins Press, 1956), 123.

39Lynch, 429.

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on the notions of Bergson. He contended that laughter comes when the natural release of

the tension and the bind created by situations are so incongruous that humor is found to be

the only possible interpretation.40

Relief Theory

The relief theory posits the notion that people experience humor and laugh because

they sense stress has been reduced in a certain way.41 The physiological symptoms of

humor, such as laughter, take a higher priority in the relief theory than in the previous two

theories. Humor is believed to stem from the relief experienced when tensions are

engendered and removed from an individual.42 Laughter is the act of venting nervous

energy.43 One may trace the beginnings of the relief theory to as early as 1707. In that year,

Anthony Ashley Cooperalso known as The Earl of Shaftesburypublished the essay, The

Freedom of Wit and Humour. He wrote, And thus the natural free Spirits of ingenious Men, if

imprisond and contrould, will find out other ways of Motion to relieve themselves in their

Constraint: and whether it be in Burlesque, Mimickry or Buffoonery, they will be glad at any

rate to vent themselves, and be revengd on their Constrainers.44

In the nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer furthered this notion by providing the

first theory arguing that laughter was a physiological response to stored nervous energy

created by irritable feelings.45 Sigmund Freud was attracted to Spencer=s work because it

included psychic energy as a component of the mechanics of laughter. Freud developed his

theory of laughter in his work, Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, which became the

primary text for the relief theory in the modern era. Morreall provided a succinct summary

of Freud=s theory: In this book he distinguishes between three kinds of laughter situations,

which he calls >jokes,= >the comic,= and >humor.= The core of his theory is that in all laughter

situations we save a certain quantity of psychic energy, energy that we have summoned for

40Helmuth Plessner. Laughing and Crying, trans. by James Spencer Churchill and

Marjorie Green, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 142.

41Meyer, 312.

42Ibid.

43Morreall, 20.

44Anthony Ashley Cooper, The Earl of Shaftsbury, Sensus Communis: An Essay on

the Freedom of Wit and Humour. Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times

(Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 46, [on‑line book]; available at

http://olldownload.libertyfund.org/EBooks/ Shaftesbury\_0096.01.pdf; accessed 01

February 2007.

45Herbert Spencer, On the Physiology of Laughter, Macmillians Magazine (March

1860): 286‑311.

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some psychic purpose but which turns out not to be needed, and this surplus energy is

discharged in laughter.46

While scholars disagree on whether any one theory can account adequately for every

instance of humor, many accounts of humor can be attributed to all three theories. Meyer

used the following joke to illustrate this point. One printed announcement in a church

bulletin noted that Weight Watchers will meet at 7:00 p.m. Please use the large double doors

at the side entrance.47 Meyer wrote that proponents of the relief theory may argue that the

humor stems from the tension released when receivers realize that the juxtaposition of the

meeting announcement and reference to the large doors was not directed at the receiver

personally. Incongruity theorists may argue that the humor results from the surprise at

seeing such a recommendation for entry following a serious announcement for a group of

people concerned about their weight. The reference to the large doors violates social norms

of politeness and respect, among others; thus the incongruity can result in humor.

Superiority theory proponents may claim that the humor originates simply from the implied

put‑down of overweight people by reference to their particular problems (i.e., needing larger

doors).48 Even though many humor theorists defend the adequacy of only one of these

theories, each theory of humor origin can provide an explanation for many instances of

humor. For this reason, the debate continues over which theory is superior (no pun

intended).

Using Humor Within a Traditional Homiletic

Any method of using humor in preaching should not be separated from the

preacher=s homiletical strategy. In this paper, the authors seek to show how humor can be

used as a tool within the elements of traditional homiletics. In On the Preparation and Delivery of

Sermons, John Broadus offered a rhetorical strategy for constructing sermons which included

foundational, formal, and functional elements.49 Humor may be used by preachers in various

ways within each element of this strategy. The examples of humor employed in this paper

were drawn from the preaching of Bob Russell, who is recognized for his skillful use of

humor in sermons.50

46Morreall, 27.

47Meyer, 315.

48Ibid.

49John Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons. 4th ed., revised by Vernon L.

Stanfield (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 29‑51, 77‑197.

50See also, James Barnette, Using Humor in Preaching: An Interview with Bob

Russell, Preaching: The Professional Journal for Preachers 10 (March‑April 1995): 5‑10.

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Forms of Humor in the Sermon

Many forms of humor exist; however, some forms may be more conducive to

preaching. Two forms which preachers may find especially helpful are anecdotes and

witticisms. Anecdotesbrief accounts of any fact or happeningallow preachers to relay

real‑life stories about people and, thus, raise the level of human interest in their sermons.

Preachers have ample places from which to draw anecdotal material: personal reading, other

speakers, stories from friends, and events in their personal lives. Personal anecdotes are

especially beneficial for two reasons. First, these anecdotes draw the congregation into the

preachers personal and family life. Second, personal anecdotes provide a vehicle for

preachers to employ self‑deprecating humor. Each of these benefits allows the preacher to

break down barriers and build a connection with the audience by letting hearers see him or

her as a normal person.51

Preachers may also find witticisma clever or amusing phraseuseful for creating

humor in their sermons. These original or third person quotes may stand alone, unconnected

to other aspects of the sermon or be used to add humor in response to other aspects of the

sermon such as an unhumorous anecdote. For example, Russell used the following thirdperson

quote to describe the problem of hypocrisy: Someone said, You can keep one foot

in two different canoes for awhile, but eventually youre going to get real uncomfortable.52

Witticisms may also be used to add humor to readings, paraphrases, explanations, and

applications, as well as unhumorous anecdotes, illustrations, and stories.

Satirean indirect criticism with a moral purposeis also useful to preachers

because it allows them to criticize unbiblical lifestyles or beliefs without appearing overly

insensitive. Russell criticized negative attitudes with satire: The cure for a critical spirit is to

replace criticism with a positive attitude. Refuse to become a grumpy old man or whiny old

woman. You might get attention with all that criticism, but you don=t win any friends. You=ll

never say, Lets go over to Hazels houseI love to hear her gripe and complain! Dont

you?53 Many other humorous forms are available for use, which can be sprinkled

throughout sermons to add variety, such as original humor, joke, satire, hyperbole,

descriptive language, and irony.

Humor in the Foundational Elements

Humor usually plays a limited role in the foundational elements of sermons.

However, humor may be used to present or support a sermons subject, proposition, and

objective. Humorous statements and humorous stories are especially helpful to the preacher

for introducing or further developing each of these foundational elements. To introduce a

51Bradley M. Rushing, Toward A Methodology Which Equips Pastors To Use

Humor Intentionally In Preaching, (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary, 2006), 122‑23.

52Ibid., 76.

53Ibid., 86.

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sermon=s subject concerning senior citizens, Russell began, AThis past week I asked the

preaching team if I should gather a focus group to discuss the temptations seniors face. . . .

Someone asked, Why? Just look in the mirror and preach from experience! I was going to

fire the person who said that, but the next day I couldnt remember who it was!54 This

method of introducing subjects may also help the preacher to diffuse subjects, which are

difficult or sensitive.

Humor in the Formal Elements

When used in the introduction, humor provides many benefits such as gaining

attention and arousing interest in the sermons subject. Bert Bradley noted, If you can cause

listeners to laugh at the outset of your speech, it does much to develop rapport between you

and the audience.55 Some forms are more suited for the introduction than others. Preachers

should be especially careful about beginning with a joke for three reasons. First, preachers

may be tempted to tell a joke unrelated to the sermons subject and thus need two

introductions to the sermon. Second, if no one laughs at the opening joke, the preacher

could have a difficult time recovering and presenting the message. Third, a joke may disrupt

an appropriate worship mood leading into a sermon. The introduction is an excellent place

for pastors to include self‑deprecating personal anecdotes because anecdotes create empathy

between preachers and their hearers. When using self‑deprecating humor, preachers should

always be truthful about the experience but never tell anything that might compromise their

ministerial reputation.

Humor functions in the body of sermons primarily to enliven illustration. However,

humor may also enliven explanation and application to a lesser extent. In the body, a

preacher may use humor in varying degrees to clarify meaning, to impress truth, to provide

mental relief, to provide emotional conditioning, and to emphasize sermon points.56 Any

particular humorous item may accomplish one or all of these benefits. Enlivening

explanation with humor provides a mental break to hearers in long exegetical sections of the

sermon and emotionally conditions them to receive the truth. A preacher has other options

in enlivening explanation such as quoting humorous Scripture, paraphrasing the text, or

responding to the text with a humorous quip. Russell provided an example of responding

with a humorous quip by saying, When you see the word >therefore,= stop and think about

what it is there for.57

Preachers who use humor in the conclusion should do so with extreme caution as

not to minimize the magnitude of the moment or hinder a possible decision in response to

54Ibid., 88‑89.

55Bert Bradley, Fundamentals of Speech Communication: The Credibility of Ideas (Dubuque,

IA: William C. Brown Publishers, 1991), 212.

56James Heflin, An Evaluation of the Use of Humor in the Sermon (Ph.D. diss.,

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974), 125‑129.

57Rushing, 112.

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the sermon. In rare and exceptional cases humor may be helpful in clarifying expectations

during the altar call. Humor may also help clarify expectations and prepare the way for an

altar call when the sermon=s subject has been extremely difficult or controversial.

Preachers may also find on rare occasions that supplemental humor is appropriate in

transitions. These opportunities may occur when a transition needs added strength to be

successful. Also, at times, circumstances arise that cause the audience as a whole to think a

common thought unrelated to the sermon subjectsuch as, This sermon is especially long

today. Transitions provide opportunities for the preacher to address verbally such thought

and redirect attention back to the sermon.

Humor in the Functional Elements

Intentional humor used in the body of the sermon can augment and enliven a

functional element. Humor, which illustrates application, may be especially helpful by

making practical demands more palatable to hearers. Such illustrations may also provide

efficient ways for preachers to make and support arguments. Humor can be helpful to

preachers arguing via testimony and analogy. Using testimony provides a way for preachers

to draw from humorous life experiences, thus extending their arguments. A special benefit is

added to a sermon when the analogy aids the impact of the argument. For example, Russell

used the following analogy to argue against the philosophy that a young person should

experience the world before settling down and following Christ: Someone described that

philosophy as sowing wild oats now and praying for crop failure later.58

Humor not only has the ability to illustrate explanation and application, but humor

also has the potential to function in those capacities. Preachers may use humor to explain in

sermons by quoting humorous texts, which pertain to the subject of the sermon, by

highlighting humorous aspects of the text through paraphrase, and by responding with a

humorous comment to the reading of an unhumorous text and to their teaching concerning

that text. Russell provided an example of responding to a humorous Scripture with his own

humorous comment: The Bible records Job as saying: The churning inside me never stops;

days of suffering confront me (30:27), my gnawing pains never rest (30:17), and, last but

not least, my breath is offensive to my wife (19:17). Why would that rank up there with the

rest of his troubles? I think she probably complained about it every day!59

Humor can also help pastors apply biblical truth to hearers in various ways.

Preachers can use humor to help listeners connect biblical truths to real‑life situations, which

they often experience. Russell provided the following example: Pride refuses to admit

mistakes and weaknesses and bristles at the idea of ever going to someone for help because

that would be to admit inferiority to another. Thats why, ladies, its so hard for men to stop

and ask for directions or even go to the doctor.60 Laughter helps the preacher confirm that

58Ibid., 116.

59Ibid., 108.

60Ibid., 117.

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58Ibid., 116.

59Ibid., 108.

60Ibid., 117.

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July 16, 2013

Homiletics or Preparing Messages, Sermons, and Bible Studies

The Presentation of HOMILETICS ‑ ‑ ‑ OR PREPARING MESSAGES, SERMONS, AND BIBLE STUDIES

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\* How to More Effectively Share the Word of God With Others

In a Class Setting.

\* These are notes shared in a Bible Institute in Lithuania

in 1994.

\* These Are Shared To Aid Bible Class Teachers, Pastors,

Students of the Word, Students in Bible College.

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Prepared by Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

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1

PREFACE

These notes are prepared and shared with you to assist those who desire to

know more about preparing Bible Messages. The notes were written from the

process of gleaning materials from a number of sources and were primarily

written to aid the preparation of young preachers in Lithuania after their

freedom from Communism as a nation.

I have made two trips to Lithuania spending 25‑ 30 hours a week teaching,

and also preaching in many of the churches and missions that have been

started there since 1994.

I have endeavored to share all the aspects of speaking: types of messages

or Bible addresses, use of illustrations, making appeals, giving invitations,

and the various aspects of preparing a message and all its parts.

It is my desire this will assist some who are interested in this theme of truth.

‑‑ Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

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The Basic Appeals to Biblical Preaching! pg. 42

(Adapted from A Manual on Homiletics for Bible Students ‑‑ James Braga, Multnomah

Press, Portland, Ore. written in 1969. Prepared for the purpose of teaching Homiletics for a

Bible Institute in Lithuania, 1994. Taught by Dr. Edward Watke Jr. )

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How To Prepare Bible Messages!

Introduction:

If the Christian Church is to maintain an aggressive witness in this generation, and if believers in

Christ are to grow and to develop into mature and effectively functioning Christians, then it is of the

utmost importance that pastors, teachers and other leaders in the church provide the sincere milk of

the Word through Bible‑centered and Bible‑derived messages or sermons for their people.

The Speaker or Preacher

It needs to be stated, and to be stated emphatically, that the most important factor in the

preparation of sermons is the preparation of the preachers own heart.

1. No amount of knowledge, or of learning or of natural endowments can take the place of a

fervent, humble, devoted heart which longs for more and more of Christ.

2. Only the man who walks with God and who lives a holy life can inspire others to grow in the

grace and knowledge of Christ. Such a man will spend much time in secret with Jesus, holding

daily, uninterrupted, unhurried communion with Him in His Word.

The preacher must also be a man of prayer who has learned the art of holy warfare

upon his knees.

1. Like Daniel, he must have the habit of prayer and find the time, yes, make the time, to pray

daily and regularly in his closet.

2. His sermons then will not be the product of mere intellectual effort but will be heaven‑sent

messages ‑‑ sent to him in answer to prayer.

E. M. Bounds, the mighty man of prayer, said in truth, Prayer puts the preachers sermon into

the preachers heart; prayer puts the preachers heart into the preachers sermon.

But the man who is to preach the message of the Book must also be a man of the

Book.

1. He must study the Scriptures not just to get a message for his congregation. He

must live in the Book.

2. The Word of God must become his meat and drink. Throughout his life he must spend

hours every week in diligent study of the Bible.

3. He must saturate himself with it until it grips his heart and soul so that with Jeremiah he may

say, His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with

forbearing, and I could not stay (Jer. 20:9).

Principle Types of Biblical Sermons!

There are many kinds of sermons and various ways of classifying them. The least complicated

method is to classify them as topical, textual, and expository.

The Topical Sermon:

Definition of a Topical Sermon:

A topical sermon is one in which the main divisions are derived from the topic, independently of

a text.

3

This means that the‑‑

1) topical sermon begins with a topic or theme and that the main parts of the sermon consist of

ideas which come from that topic.

2) it does not require a text as the basis of its message. That is, a certain text is not the source

of the topical sermon, although it is all based on the Word of God.

3) we start with a Biblical topic. The main divisions of the sermon outline must be drawn from

this Biblical topic, and each main division must be supported by a Scripture reference.

Example of a Topical Sermon

Satans Attack of the Family!

Aim: Recognizing some aspects of his attack! (Eph. 6:10‑18)

A. His Goal is to Devour! (I Peter 5:8,9)

B. His Desire is to Sift as Wheat! (Luke 22:31,32)

C. His Method is to Build a Stronghold! (II Cor. 10:3‑5)

D. His Purpose is to Bring Total Bondage to Sin! (II Tim. 2:24‑26)

Unity of Thought in a Topical Sermon

It will be observed from the example given above that the topical sermon contains one central

idea. There is but one theme, not many. In a topical sermon we must limit the entire outline to the

one idea contained in the topic and the aim of the message itself.

The Various Kinds of Topics

The Scriptures deal with every conceivable phase of human life and activity. They also reveal

Gods purposes in grace toward men in time and in eternity. Thus the Bible contains an

inexhaustible storehouse of topics from which the preacher may obtain materials for topical

messages suited for every occasion and condition in which men find themselves.

Through constant and diligent study of the Word of God, the man of God will enrich his own

soul with precious nuggets of divine truth.

There are many themes, such as: influences for good, little things God uses, blunders of Gods

children, blessings that come through suffering, results of unbelief, facts about prayer, meaning of

prayer, methods of prayer, power of prayer, results of prayer, lies of satan, conquests of the

cross, characteristics of a Christian, glories of heaven, riches of the Christian, power of Gods love,

etc.

Choice of Topics

If we are to know the topic to select, we must seek the leading of the Lord. The choice may be

determined by the theme on which the minister is asked to speak or by the specific occasion on

which the message is to be delivered. Certain conditions within the particular congregation may

indicate the need for selecting a topic suited to the circumstances.

Basic PRINCIPLES for the PREPARATION of Topical Outlines!

1. The main divisions should be in logical or chronological order. (Illus.)

The Believers Hope

Topic: Characteristics of the Believers Hope!

I. It is a living hope, I Pet 1:3

II. It is a saving hope, I Thess 5:8

III. It is a sure hope, Heb. 6:19

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IV. It is a good hope, II Thess. 2:16

V. It is an unseen hope, Rom. 8:24

VI. It is a blessed hope, Tit 2:13

VII. It is an eternal hope, Tit. 3:7

2. The main division may be an analysis of the topic. Each part of the outline contributes

to the completeness of the discussion of the topic.

3. The main divisions may present the various proofs of a topic.

Knowing Gods Word

Topic: Some values of knowing the Word of God!

I. Knowing Gods Word makes one wise unto salvation, II Tim. 3:15

II. Knowing Gods Word keeps us from sin, Psa. 119:11

III. Knowing Gods Word produces spiritual growth, I Pet. 2:2

IV. Knowing Gods Word results in successful living, Josh. 2:7‑8, Psa. 1

4. The main divisions may treat a subject by comparison or contrast with

something else in Scripture.

An Effective Testimony!

Topic: A comparison between the testimony of the believer and salt.

I. Like salt, the believers testimony should season, Col. 4:6

II. Like salt, the believers testimony should purify, I Thess. 4:4

III. Like salt, the believers testimony should not lose its savor, Matt. 5:13

IV. Like salt, the believers testimony should create thirst, I Pet. 2:12

5. The main divisions may be expressed by a certain word or phrase of Scripture which

is repeated though out the outline.

The Ability of God!

Topic: Some Things Which God Is Able to DO!

I. He is able to save, Heb 7:25

II. He is able to keep, Jude 24

III. He is able to help, Heb. 2:18

IV. He is able to subdue, Phil. 3:21

V. He is able to give grace, II Cor. 9:8

VI. He is able to do beyond what we ask or think, Eph. 3:20

6. The main divisions may be supported by an identical word or phrase of Scripture though out

the outline.

7. The main division may consist of a word study showing the various meanings of a certain word

or words in Scripture. (Such as a study of the names of Christ, or the names of God, etc.)

Various ideas about Topical messages!

1. The topical message is suited to the construction of the doctrinal sermon.

2. Many times you may choose to work on a series of topical messages ‑‑ such as the Love of

Jesus, the Face of, the Hands of, the Tears of, the Cross of, the Blood of, etc.

3. A study of major subjects in a book or a group of books in the Bible will also suggest a series

of discourses in topical form.

Exercises:

1. Prepare a topical outline using one of the themes or ideas listed:

2. Prepare a topical outline using your own topic, support each main division with appropriate

Scripture. Be careful to follow the principles suggested above.

3. List seven suitable topics for evangelistic messages, and make a topical outline of one of them.

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4. Find a significant word or phrase which occurs repeatedly in a book of the New Testament and

develop a topical outline from the repetitions of that word or phrase. (Such as the word,walk in

Ephesians 4, 5, 6.)

5. With the help of a concordance prepare a word study on the word forgive.

The Textual Sermon!

Definition of a Textual Sermon!

A textual sermon is one in which the main divisions are derived from a text consisting of a brief

portion of Scripture. Each of these divisions is then used as a line of suggestion, and the text

provides the theme of the sermon. So ‑‑

1. The main lines of development are drawn from the text itself. (In this way the main outline is

kept strictly within the limits of the text. It may consist of one line of a verse, or a whole verse, or

two or three verses.)

2. The main division is derived from the text. The main divisions suggest the features to be

shared in the message. Sometimes the text is so rich and full that we may obtain many truths or

features from it which will serve as a development of the thoughts contained in the outline. At other

times it may be necessary to draw from other portions of Scripture to develop the main division.

3. The definition further states that the text provides the theme of the sermon. (In contrast to

the topical sermon, in which we begin with a topic or theme, we now begin with a text, which will

indicate the dominant idea of the message.)

Example of Textual Sermon Outlines!

Gods Power to the Faint! Isa. 40:28‑31

I. What Our God is Like! ‑‑ 40:28

1. He is Never Discouraged!

2. He Never Faints nor is Weary!

3. He is Never Short of Wisdom!

II. What Our God Offers! ‑‑ 40:29,30

1. He Gives Power to the Faint!

2. He Increaseth our Strength!

III. What Our God Wants To DO For US! ‑‑ 40:31

1. He Gives Us Power to Rise Above the Problem! (as eagles)

2. He Enables Us to Run and Not Be Weary!

3. He Strengthens Us to Walk, and not Faint!

Basic PRINCIPLES for the PREPARATION of Textual Outlines!

1. The textual outline should be centered around the main thought in the text and the main

divisions may be derived from the text so as to amplify or develop that one theme.

The Body ‑‑ a Sacrifice! (Rom. 12:1,2)

I. The reason for sacrifice, I beseech you ... by the mercies of God.

II. The thing to be sacrificed, present your body

III. The conditions of sacrifice, a living sacrifice ... unto God

IV. The obligation of sacrifice, which is your reasonable service.

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2. The main divisions may consist of the truths or principles suggested by the text. (See Psalm

32 or Psalm 51.)

3. It may be possible to find more than one theme or dominant thought in a text,

depending upon the point of view from which we regard the text, but only one central idea should

be developed in any one outline. (Such as John 3:16)

Gods Great Gift! God Gives Us Eternal Life!

I. It is a love gift, God so loved I. The One who gave it ‑ God

II. It is a sacrificial gift... that he gave.... II. The reason He gave it ‑‑ so loved

III. It is an eternal gift... have eternal.. III. The price He paid for it ‑‑

IV. It is a universal gift ... whosoever.. IV. The part we have in it ‑ believe

V. It is a conditional gift .. believeth... V. The certainty of our possessing it

‑‑ should not , but have ....!

4. The main divisions should be in logical or chronological sequence. (note above )

5. The very words of the text may form the main divisions of the outline, provided that these

divisions are gathered around one main thought.

6. The context from which the text is taken must be carefully observed and related to the text.

7. Some texts contain comparisons or contrasts which can be treated best by pointing out their

purposeful similarities or differences. (Matt. 7, building a house on the sand or on the rock. In

Psalm one, notice the contrast between the godly person and the worldling.)

8. Two or three verses, each taken from different parts of Scripture, may be put

together and treated as though they are but one text.

Suggestions of Series of Textual Sermons!

1. Dealing with the parables of Christ.

2. Dealing with the Seven statements of Christ from the Cross.

3. Several places where the Lord addresses individuals by their names twice in

succession. Repetition in Scripture is a means of emphasis: Gen. 22:11,12;

Exod. 3:4,5; Luke 10:41,42; Acts 9:4; etc.

4. The I Ams of Jesus as found in the gospels, especially in the gospel of John.

Exercises:

1. Prepare a text outline from Psalm 1:1‑3, or Psalm 23.

2. Prepare a textual outline on Titus 2:11‑13, giving the title, central thought, and main divisions.

3. Find your own text and by the use of the method of multiple approach, construct two outlines

from the same text. Write out your outline fully, and indicate the title, central thought and main

divisions in each outline.

4. Write out a sermon outline from Isaiah 1:18. Give it a title, main divisions, etc.

5. Find a suitable text for ‑‑

an evangelistic message

a funeral sermon

a wedding service

a missionary message

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a young peoples service

a message for Christian workers

a fathers day message

a New Years day message

The Expository Sermon

Definition of the Expository Sermon!

It is the exposing of the thought of a passage of Scripture taken as a unit through the

application of the grammatical, historical, and textual principles.

The theme, thesis, major, and minor divisions are taken from the passage and are made

relevant to life today by proper organization, argumentation, illustration, application and appeal. ‑‑‑

F. B. Meyer

An expository sermon is one in which a more or less extended portion of Scripture is

interpreted in relation to one theme or central idea. The bulk of the material for the sermon is drawn

directly from the passage and the outline consists of a series of progressive ideas centered around

that one main idea.

As we examine this definition, we note in the first place that an expository sermon is based:

1. on a more or less extended portion of Scripture. The passage may consist of a few

verses or it may extend through a whole chapter or even further. Probably a minimum of four

verses, but with no limit on the length.

2. This more or less extended portion is interpreted in relation to one theme or central idea. It

is an expository unit consisting of a number of verses out of which a central idea emerges.

3. The bulk of the material for the sermon is drawn directly from the passage. Not only should

the leading ideas of the passage be brought out in an expository discourse, but the details should

also be suitably explained and made to furnish the chief materials for the sermon.

The theme of the passage must ever be kept in mind throughout an expository sermon, and

as that one main idea is developed out of the passage there should follow in the outline a series of

progressive ideas all related to the central thought.

In an expository sermon we are to unfold the meaning or make the passage clearly understood.

In comparison to the textual sermon, in the expository sermon the preacher is to form all the

subdivisions, as well as the main division, from the same unit of Scripture which he proposes to

preach from.

Examples of Expository Sermons!

The Christians Spiritual Warfare! (Eph. 6:10‑18)

I. The Christians Moral, vs. 10‑13

1. It should be high, vs. 10

2. It should be steadfast, vs. 11‑13

II. The Christians Armor, vs. 14‑17

1. It should be defensive in character, vs. 14‑17a

2. It should be offensive in character, vs. 17b

III. The Christians Prayer Life, vs. 18

1. It should be persistent, vs. 18a

2. It should be intercessory, vs. 18b

Christ Apprehending Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1‑10

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I. The Search For Zacchaeus, vs. 1‑4

II. The Befriending of Zacchaeus, vs. 5‑7

III. The Salvation of Zacchaeus, vs. 8‑10

Basic Principles for the Preparation of Expository Outlines!

1. Any passage under consideration should be carefully studied to understand its meaning and to

obtain the central thought of the text.

2. Significant words or phrases in the text may indicate or form the main divisions of the outline.

3. The outline should be drawn from the expository unit in a chronological way.

4. The important truths suggested by the passage may form the main divisions of the outline.

5. Two or three passages from various parts of Scripture may be put together to form the basis

of an expository outline.

6. By means of the method of multiple approach, we may treat a passage of Scripture in various

ways and thus have two or more entirely different outlines on the same portion.

7. We should, in study, note the context.

8. In study we should also note the historical background of the passage, whenever possible.

9. The details of the text should be treated properly, but not necessarily exhaustively. Dont

spend too much time on the details.

10.The truths contained in the text must be related to the present day through application of truths

to present needs.

Series of Expository Messages!

A suggested list could include the following:

From the book of Hebrews, chapter 11

Abel ‑‑ The Sacrifice of Faith (Gen. 4:1‑5; Heb. 11:4)

Enoch ‑‑ The Walk of Faith (Gen. 5:21‑24; Heb . 11:5‑6)

Abraham ‑‑ The Obedience of Faith (Gen. 12‑18; Heb. 11:8‑10)

Isaac ‑‑ The Vision of Faith (Gen. 26, 27; Heb. 11:20)

Jacob ‑ The Discernment of Faith (Gen. 27‑35; Heb 11:21)

Joseph ‑‑ The Assurance of Faith (Gen. 37‑50; Heb. 11:22)

One could share a series on the Hallelujah Psalms!

Psalms 106, 11, 112, 113, 135 and especially Psalm 146‑150

A series from Revelation chapters 2, 3 about the seven messages to the seven churches could

include the following:

The Busy Church ‑‑ 2:1‑7

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The Suffering Church ‑‑ 2:8‑11

The Compromising Church ‑‑ 2:12‑17

The Corrupt Church ‑‑ 2:18‑29

The Dead Church ‑‑ 3:1‑6

The Missionary Church ‑‑ 3:7‑13

The Indifferent, Apostate Church ‑‑ 3:14‑22

Exercises:

1. Prepare an expository outline on I Corinthians 13:1‑8, giving the title, central thought, and main

divisions of the passage.

2. Prepare an expository outline on John 15:1`‑8, giving the title, central thought or theme and

main divisions of the passage.

3. Prepare an evangelistic, expository message from John 3:25‑28, giving the title, central

thought or theme, and main divisions of the passage.

4. Make a biographical sermon outline on Abrahams nephew Lot (note all the portions that deal

with his life in Genesis 13, 14, and 19.) Give the title, central idea, and main divisions, and indicate

the references which relate to each main division.

5. Prepare an evangelistic sermon from Ephesians 2:1‑9. Give the title, theme and main

divisions of the text.

6. Choose your own expository unit and prepare two different expository outlines on the same

passage. Indicate the central thought and main divisions of each.

7. Prepare an expository outline on I Corinthians 3:1‑8, giving the title, central thought, and main

divisions of the passage. Indicate the verses which relate to each main division.

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The Mechanics of Sermon Construction!

A sermon is a message from God, which is intended to be heard and to have an immediate

impact upon the listeners.

Formal Outline of a Sermon

An outline should be brief.

Title ............\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Text: ........... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Introduction

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Proposition...... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interrogative..... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Transitional Sentence..... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I. First Main Division... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. 1st subdivision... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

discussion, sharing content

2. 2nd subdivision... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

discussion, sharing content

II. Second Main Division... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. 1st subdivision... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

discussion, sharing content

2. 2nd subdivision... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

discussion, sharing content

(continued on as above through the outline, illustrations are placed throughout the message as

desired and needed)

Conclusion.....

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Title of a Message or Sermon!

The title is the expression of the specific feature to be presented in the sermon, stated in a

manner which may be suitable for advertising the sermon.

1. The title should be pertinent to the text or to the message.

2. The title should be interesting.

3. The title should be in keeping with the dignity of the pulpit.

4. The title should generally be brief.

5. The title may be stated in the form of either facts, questions, or

exclamation.

Introduction to a Message or Sermon!

The introduction is the process by which the preacher endeavors to prepare the minds and

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secure the interest of his hearers in the message he has to proclaim.

The Purpose is ‑‑

1. To secure the good will of the hearers. (The introduction then must be presented in such a

way as to win the favorable attention of the entire congregation if at all possible.)

2. To arouse interest in the theme. (People may not seem interested at first or may be

preoccupied with other things, or indifferent to biblical truth. Other conditions may distract them such

as a poorly ventilated building, insufficient lighting,the slamming of doors, or other sounds outside.)

Principles for a Good Introduction!

1. It generally should be brief.

2. It should be interesting. (The first few minutes of a sermon are crucial. How can we stimulate

interest as we begin the sermon? ‑‑ By arousing curiosity, by means of variety, by the use of

illustrations, by a captivating title, by relating the sermon to life situations. )

3. It should lead to the dominant idea or central thought of the sermon or message.

Proposition: The statements contained in the introduction should consist of a series of progressive

ideas culminating in the one main idea of the message.

4. It should be stated in the outline in a few brief sentences or phrases, with each successive

idea on a different line. (Long complex sentences should be avoided. They should be clear, even

at just a glance, for the one bringing the message.)

The Proposition (or theme) of the Message or Sermon!

The theme or thesis is a simple declaration of the subject which the preacher proposes to

discuss, develop, prove, or explain in the sermon. In other words, it is the sermon reduced to one

sentence.

The proposition contains the basic element of the theme or central thought of the sermon. It

should be so stated as to relate it to the hearers in the form of a timeless truth.

Look at Isaiah 55:7 Title: The Blessings of Forgiveness!

I. The Objects of Gods Pardon.

II. The Conditions of Gods Pardon.

III. The Promise of Gods Pardon.

The theme is that God pardons sinners! Observe that the basic element of the theme, divine

pardon, is expressed in a statement which has universal application. It is a timeless truth so stated!

The Importance of the Proposition!

1. The proposition is the foundation of the entire structure of the sermon. The importance of

a correct proposition cannot be overestimated. Every word of it must be so carefully stated that

the proposition will accurately express the main thought of the sermon.

2. It clearly indicates to the congregation the course of the sermon.

Types of Propositions!

1. The form most commonly used is the declarative or declaring ‑‑ a simple

statement expressing the main idea of the sermon.

Example:

The Life of Dependence!

Proposition: The Christian life may be said to be a life of dependence!

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I. Because we are dependent upon Christ for Salvation! Tit 3:5; Jh 14:6

II. Because we are dependent upon the Word of God for Spiritual Growth, I Pet. 2:2

III. Because we are dependent upon Prayer for Spiritual Power, James 5:16

IV. Because we are dependent upon Fellowship for Mutual Encouragement, I John 1:3

2. Another type is the interrogative or using questions. The dominant idea of the sermon is

put in the form of a question. We could take the sermon above and use the approach of a

question! Asking, Why is the Christian life said to be a life of dependence?

3. The third kind of proposition is called the hortatory (exhorting). This is employed when the

preachers aim is to encourage or exhort his congregation to adopt a certain course of action. (This

is probably used the most.)

4. The fourth kind of proposition is known as the exclamatory. (This type of thesis takes the

form of an exclamation where the sermonizer desires to give special emphasis to the main idea of

his theme. For example, if he wishes to stress the blessings which the believer has in Christ as

revealed in Ephesians 1:13,14, he may use an exclamation such as that shown in the outline

below.)

Supremely Blessed!, Ephesians, chapter one

Proposition: How wonderful are the blessings which we have in Christ!

I. We are Chosen in Him, vs. 4

II. We are Redeemed in Him, vs. 7

III. We Have An Inheritance in Him, vs. 11

IV. We are Sealed in Him, Vs 13

Principles for the Formulation of the Proposition!

1. The proposition should contain one main idea.

2. The proposition should generally be expressed in the form of a timeless truth stated simply

and clearly. It should be in the form of a complete sentence. Since it is the expression of a Biblical

truth, it should often be stated to suggest the idea of obligation, worthiness, or desirability.

Example: Triumphant Living!

Text: Phil. 1:12‑21

Proposition: Christians can be triumphant in Christ!

I. In the face of adversity, as Paul was, vs. 12‑145

II. In the face of opposition, as Paul was, vs. 15‑19

III. In the face of death, as Paul was, vs. 20‑21

3. The proposition should be stated as concisely and clearly as possible. (Few words ‑‑ much

meaning.)

4. The proposition should be connected to the main body of the discourse by questions and a

transitional sentence. (Interrogatives are: Why? How? What? When? and Where?)

Example: Statement ‑‑ The Christian life may be said to be a life of dependence.

Interrogative ‑‑ Why is the Christian life said to be a life of dependence?

Transitional sentence ‑‑ There are several reasons why the Christian life may be said to be a life of

dependence.

5. The proposition may be formulated by including the key word and the transitional sentence with

the statement of the thesis or aim of the message.

It is best if the preacher writes out the proposition in his sermon notes. The proper place is

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generally at the end of the introduction. You are stating what your goal is, or your aim of the

message. The hearer knows where you are going, what you are seeking to accomplish in the

message although you are not sharing everything at that point.

Exercise:

Write a suitable introduction and proposition for each of the following outlines:

Topical sermon:

Title: The Gift of Righteousness

Central thought: Distinctive of Gods gift of righteousness.

I. It is an indispensable gift, Eph. 2:8,9

II. It is a free gift, Rom. 5:15

III. It is a blessed gift, Rom. 5:17

Textual sermon:

Title: Rest For the Soul

Text: Matt. 11:28‑30

Central thought: Aspects of Christs answer to the longings of man

or rest of soul.

I. A gracious invitation, vs. 28

II. A wonderful promise, vs. 28‑30

III. A simple condition, vs. 29

Preparation Includes the Following:

Subject, Theme, Thesis, Key Word, System of Outlining a Message!

Example:

1. Subject: Faith

2. Theme: one aspect of the subject, ie, The Source of Faith!

3. Thesis: The Source of Faith is the Word of God (Just adding a predicate to the theme will

finish the sentence.)

4. Interrogative or question: Why?

5. Key Word: Reasons why the Word of God is the source of faith.

6. Transitional Sentence: There are four (4) reasons why the Word of God is the source of faith.

(Know where you are going!!)

To preach without notes in any message‑‑ 50% organization, 40% saturation or to

know thoroughly, and 10% memorization!

Exercise:

1. Construct an outline and proposition for Psalm 23, making it a textual sermon.

2. Construct an outline and proposition, theme, thesis, etc. interrogative statement, etc., on John

14:1‑6.

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Outlining ‑‑ Making the Main Divisions!

Divisions are the main sections of an orderly message or sermon.

Value of Divisions to the Preacher

1. Divisions promote clarity of thought. (To be clear to the hearer, the sermon cannot be built on

vague ideas or indefinite expressions.)

2. Divisions promote unity of thought.

3. Divisions assist the preacher in the proper treatment of a subject.

4. Divisions enable the preacher to remember the main points of his sermon. (The preacher

should know the message well enough to be able to look at his congregation, and not at his notes.)

Value of Divisions to the Congregation

1. They make the main points of the message clear.

2. They assist the memory in recalling the main features of the sermon.

3. They make listening more enjoyable with anticipation and expectation.

Principles for the Preparation of Main Divisions

1. The main divisions should grow out of the proposition, with each division contributing to the

development of the proposition. (Just as the proposition is the theme of the sermon, the main

divisions are the unfolding of the proposition.)

2. Main divisions should be arranged in some form of progression.

3. Main divisions as a whole should exhaust or completely develop the proposition.

4. Each main division should contain a single idea.

5. The main divisions should be stated clearly, with each division expressing a complete idea.

6. The main divisions should be as few as possible. (Generally speaking, three, four, or five

divisions will be sufficient to develop the aim or proposition of the message in relation to the

Scripture text.)

7. The sermon plan should be presented with variety from week to week.

8. The main divisions should be in parallel structure: The outline should be arranged in such a form

that the divisions are properly balanced and matched with one another.

Example:

Title: When God Justifies a Sinner

Text: Romans 5:1‑11

Proposition: Justification produces blessed results in those who believe:

Interrogative: What Results?

Transitional sentence: These verses reveal several results of justification

in those who believe.

I. Peace with God, vs. 1

II. Access to God, vs. 2

III. Joy in God, vs. 2

15

IV. Triumph in Christ, vs. 3‑4

V. The witness of the Holy Spirit, vs. 5

VI. Perfect security, vs. 6‑11

Title: Seven Blessings In Psalm 23

I. Possession ‑‑ The LORD is my shepherd

II. Preparation ‑‑ He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

III. Progress ‑‑ He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his

names sake.

IV. Presence ‑‑ Thou are with me.

V. Provision ‑‑ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine

enemies.

VI. Privilege ‑‑ Thou anointest my head with oil.

VII. Prospect ‑‑ I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Principles for the Preparation of Subdivisions!

1. The subdivisions are derived from their respective main divisions and should be a logical

development of them.

a. The primary function of a subdivision is to develop the thought contained in

the main division.

b. The points should be directly related to the main point.

c. Sub points or divisions are subordinate to the main points.

d. Subheadings are developed from the respective main headings.

Example:

Title: The Psalm of Contentment

Proposition: The believer is likened in Scripture to a sheep which belongs to

the Lord.

Interrogative: What does this Psalm teach in relation to the Lords sheep?

Transitional sentence: There are three main facts which we may learn in

this Psalm in regard to the Lords sheep.

I. The sheeps Shepherd, vs. 1

1. An omnipotent Shepherd, vs. 1

2. A personal Shepherd, vs. 1

II. The sheeps provision, vs 2‑5

1. Rest, vs. 2

2. Guidance, vs. 3

3. Comfort, vs 4

4. Satisfaction, vs 5

III. The sheeps prospect, vs. 6

1. A bright prospect for this life, vs. 6

2. A blessed prospect for the hereafter, vs. 6

2. The subdivision or headings should be in parallel structure.

3. The subdivisions should be limited in number.

4. Like the main division, the subdivisions do not have to be in the order of the text.

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Exercise:

1. Construct a textual outline on Ephesians 1:1‑8, with the sub points.

2. Construct a textual outline on Isaiah 41:10, with the features of the outlines above.

3. Prepare a salvation message from John 3:1‑7 with main divisions, subdivisions,

proposition, etc.

The Body of the Sermon, or the Discussion!

Definition: The discussion is the proper unfolding of the ideas contained in the divisions. It is

the body while the divisions are but the skeleton.

It is at this point that the preacher needs to study well to prepare the body of the sermon

thoroughly. He must somehow enlarge or expand his outline so that it will result in a well‑rounded

and vital message and accomplish the objective that he has in mind.

The preacher must introduce, select, and arrange his materials so they will effectively develop

each of the points in the divisions and subdivisions.

Qualities he must develop in the content of the sermon)

1. He must strive for unity.

2. He must strive to have balance and proportion.

3. He must have progression in the message.

4. He must work at brevity. (Every word he says should count. Each idea he expresses should

be pertinent.)

5. He must strive to have clarity in content, words, outline, and approach.

6. He will want to have vitality, the sermon must be alive, and with variety. Some sanctified

humor is good.

Sources of Material for the body of the message ‑‑ or discussion!

The sermonizer probably will draw materials for the body of the message from five principal

sources.

1. The Word of God ‑‑ the most important source and resource. Here is the inexhaustible source

of materials for the development and unfolding of the ideas contained in each division or point of

the sermon.

Parallel passages play an important part in this connection and the preacher should not hesitate

to quote from the Scriptures, no matter how familiar the texts may be. The Bible also contains

illustrations suitable for almost any and every occasion.

2. Other forms of literature

Critical and devotional commentaries

Devotional books and hymnals

Christian biography

Bible handbooks and Bible dictionaries.

Books on archaeology, Bible customs, and times, and Bible lands, etc.

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Current literature ‑‑ newspapers, current events, magazines, etc.

3. Experience

A pastors personal experience is another valuable means for the expansion of the message.

Sharing personal testimonies of what he has lived through. Speaking with personal convictions and

vividness will leave a lasting impression.

He must be careful not to draw undue attention to himself, his sole purpose must be to glorify

the Lord and to give the people a clearer understanding of the text which he seeks to interpret.

4. Observation

Life abounds with things, some of them seeming trivial in character, which may add greatly to

the interest of a sermon. The minister must have eyes to see and a mind to perceive the

relationship of the commonplace to spiritual truths contained in the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus used as object lessons the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, the seed on the

ground, the fish in the sea, and even the hairs of mens heads.

5. Imagination

Such ideas will create an element of originality and surprise and add a fresh approach to the

treatment of the subject. The use of the imagination in a sermon can be a valuable ally to the

preacher if he is careful how he uses it. It can make portions live as imaginative aspects are briefly

shared.

6. Warnings:

a. He must be sure he does not allow his imagination to go to extremes.

b. He must avoid the creation of mental pictures which are unlikely or beyond all reason.

c. His descriptions should be stated as mere ideas and not given as fact.

d. Imagination should be exercised in moderation and it should always be used in good taste.

Rhetorical Process in the Development of the Sermon Outline!

There are several rhetorical processes which are used in the expansion or development of the

sermon outline: namely, explanation, argumentation, quotation, illustration, and application.

The Use of Explanation:

1. One of the most important features in a sermon is the explanation of the text. The message

is based on the the Word of God, and the portion or portions of the sacred text used should be

explained clearly and properly.

2. There must be the study of the context. ‑‑ both the immediate and the more remote.

Observing the context often helps the hearer, as well as the preacher, to recognize the limitations

in the meaning of a word or statement and prevents misconstruing the proper sense of the text.

(Cf Philippians 2:12 with book, etc.)

3. A proper study (exegesis) of the text will also include the correlation of the text with other

Scriptures. Frequent use of parallel passages, comparing and contrasting should take place as he

seeks to explain the Word of God.

4. Sound interpretation of Scripture also depends upon an application of the laws of language.

5. Studying various translations may be helpful, but care should be given in this as well.

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6. The writings of many learned and devote scholars are the results of biblical research and

contain spiritual treasures helpful in the preparation of sermons.

7. The historical and cultural background of the text may also have an important bearing upon

its interpretation and hence the sermon content.

The Use of Argumentation!

1. The is the first and foremost method in the use of the Scripture. The preacher is concerned

about presenting the thus saith the Lord, clearly and with forcefulness. He is declaring Divine

declarations!

2. Another method of argumentation is reasoning, that is, the use of logical processes to arrive

at a conclusion or to bring men to a decision.

Argument from cause to effect, from effect to cause, or from cumulative evidence, as well as

from induction and deduction ‑‑these are various forms of persuasive rhetoric.

3. Another form of argumentation is by means of testimony. The Bible speaks of the witness

of Christ. (note Gospel of John concerning Christ in chapters

4. The orderly arrangement of a sermon outline in logical sequence may also be a means of

persuasion.

The Use of Quotations!

Quotations can add greatly to the development of the sermon outline. They can give force and

pungency to a message.

1. By the use of Scriptures portions, memorized and shared.

2. Brief thought provoking sayings, like the proverbs.

3. Statements from authoritative sources. (Be sure they are accurate and true.)

The Use of Poetry

Be sure that it is fitting, not too long and of benefit.

Exercises:

1. Make a list of ten proverbs and state under what circumstances you would use them in a

sermon.

2. Prepare a topical outline suitable for a communion service ‑‑‑ giving the title,

introduction, proposition, interrogative, transitional sentence, main divisions and subdivisions.

Expand the outline by use of the rhetorical devices discussed in the foregoing points.

3. Select a more or less extended passage on the subject of prayer and prepare an

expository sermon which may serve as a challenge to prayer. Follow the same procedure as

required under number two above.

4. Make a listing of various biblical statements, etc., that you could use as illustrations, or as

quotations to prove a point.

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The Use of Illustrations in Sermons!

An illustration has often been said to be to the sermon what a window is to a building ‑‑ to admit

light. Thus a good illustration makes a message clear.

An illustration is a means of throwing light upon a sermon by the use of an example. An

illustration may take one of several forms. It may consist of a parable, an analogy, an allegory, a

story (including an anecdote or fable) an account of a personal experience, an event in history or an

incident from biography.

The Use of Illustrations. . . Broadus!

1. They are used to explain.

2. They are used to prove.

3. They adorn the truth and make it interesting.

4. They help to arouse attention and help people to be remain attentive.

5. They render a subject impressive.

6. They appeal to the emotions.

7. They aid the listener to retain the lesson of the sermon.

The Value of Illustrations!

The most important aspect of a sermon is not the illustration, but the explanation of the text.

The interpretation, which must carry with it the burden of the preachers message, is all‑important.

Illustrations, no matter how vivid or interesting, are only of secondary importance.

1. They give clarity to the sermon.

Truth sometimes is so profound or abstruse that regardless of how the preacher labors to

explain a text, his people may be unable to grasp the meaning until he puts it into word pictures.

2. They make the sermon interesting.

The message may be dry, uninteresting until dressed up with illustrations. The pulpiteer must, if

he is to sustain interest, introduce into the message that which is both interesting and challenging to

the mind of the listener. Illustrations relax the mind, serve to arouse flagging attention, enliven the

message and prepare the hearer to listen thoughtfully to what follows.

3. They give vivid witness to truth.

Good illustrations impress the mind by the forcefulness of the examples which they portray.

4. They give emphasis to truth.

Illustrations can bring truth home to the heart of the hearer in a powerful way.

Principles to be Observed in the Use of Illustrations!

1. Use apt illustrations.

It must be obvious, clear and used effectively to illuminate the text or the truth to be made

clear.

2. Use illustrations that are credible.

Not far‑fetched or exaggerated, but that which has credence.

3. State the facts of the illustration accurately.

It should be told truthfully, and told well. If he forgets part of it the illustration will detract and it will

be ruined.

4. As a general rule, use illustrations that are fairly brief. Not so prominent that it robs the message

of its importance. It is only to clarify, it is not the message.

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5. Use discrimination in the selection of illustrations.

Do not use the bizarre, the course or the grotesque for they have no place in

preaching. Dont use so many that the message is just a series of stories. Usually one illustration

under each main point or division is ample.

Caution:

a. Dont use every illustration that occurs to you.

b. Seek for great variety in illustrations.

c. Dont talk about the illustration, just illustrate.

d. Avoid turning attention from the subject to bring an illustration

which does not explain the text, but just entertains.

The Accumulation of Illustrations!

In order to avoid repetition of illustrations, it is necessary for the preacher to find new illustrations

constantly.

They are not always easy to find; he needs to accumulate materials whenever he comes

across that which is of value and which might be put to use in future sermons. He ought to set up a

file, using what ever means is best for filing.

Exercise:

1. State how you would illustrate the following texts: Rom 6:23; John 3:30;

Ps. 23:3; Isa. 55:6.

2. Use your imagination to illustrate the I Ams of Jesus!

The Application of the Sermon!

Application is one of the most important elements of the sermon. By this process the claims of

the Word of God are focussed upon the individual in order that he may respond favorably to the

message.

Application should show the relevancy of Scripture to a persons every day life.

The kind of response will differ from message to message. The purpose may be to‑ change an

attitude, or to foster a decision, or to encourage the embracing of truth.

The Time for the Application to be Made!

This must be determined by the contents of the message! Generally the preacher will want to

make application in connection with each spiritual truth discussed or presented. . . point by point.

The appeal is thus interwoven with the entire fabric of the sermon and the truths are applied as the

message progresses.

At times it might be best to omit the appeal entirely from the body of the sermon and to

reserve the personal impact of the message until the end of the sermon itself. Sermons of an

evangelistic character are often under this category.

In expository sermons it is best to make application along the way lest the sermon become

weighty and difficult for the average person to follow.

The amount of time given in the sermon to application will also vary. Beginning preachers are

apt to be overbearing a bit in application. There is happy medium between too much and too little

application.

Prerequisites to Effective Application!

1. It is of vital importance that the preacher be a man who lives close to God. Preaching

which warms the heart and stirs the soul is not born in the cold atmosphere of intellectualism, but in

intimate and continual fellowship with the Lord.

The preacher must get close to the heart of Jesus until the glow of His great heart fills the

preachers being and radiates through his person.

Handley C. G. Moule said to his younger brethren in the ministry, Take care that no

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preoccupation with things pastoral allows you to forget the supreme need of drawing out of

Christs fulness and out of the treasures of His Word for your own soul and life, as if that were the

one solitary soul and life in existence.

2. In order to be successful in relating the Bible to the present, the man of God must be well

educated.

If he is to apply the truth effectively to his congregation he must be a diligent student of the

Word of God. He must be a constant and earnest Bible student. Also he needs to be well read

and have a solid foundation of general knowledge.

3. Another qualification which a preacher should possess if he is to apply the truth effectively is an

understanding of human nature.

He needs to have a sensitive understanding of the basic needs of various age groups ‑‑ the

needs of the older people, middle aged, young people, single men and women, teens, young

children as well as young married.

The preacher needs to relate well to the needs and burdens people have. To understand their

spiritual needs, cares, and emotional problems as well as sin problems and to understand the sin

nature in particular.

4. To be able to relate the truths of Scripture to the problems and circumstances of his people,

the minister must acquaint himself with their conditions and involvement.

5. Finally, for the preacher to obtain the right response to his messages, he must be completely

dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:18,19) the ministry of the Holy Spirit is

referred to over 60 times in the book of Acts.

Principles for Making the Truth Relevant!

1. Relate the sermon to basic human problems and needs.

2. As a general rule, make the application specific or definite.

3. Relate the truth to the times.

a. relate to the society and needs where people find themselves.

b. relate to the fact of Christs soon return.

c. relate to the kind of stress, impact of world affairs to which people are

subjected on a daily basis.

d. relate to the place God has for us in the whole worldwide scheme of things

in regard to world evangelism.

e. relate to prophecy and this events that are taking place. (II Pet. 1:19)

Exercise:

1. Give four titles for a series of messages on evangelism. Select one of these titles and prepare

a sermon on it. Use all the foregoing things taught in application to the work done on the sermon.

2. Prepare a topical message suitable to preach to young couples in regard to their home,

marriage or personal relationships. (Any of the foregoing as you see fit.) Follow through with all

the steps as given in the foregoing materials in sermon preparation.

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The Conclusion of a Message or Sermon!

We have learned that every sermon needs unity and purpose. At the beginning the preacher

sets out to accomplish one aim in the sermon. That aim must always be clear and distinct and must

control all the minister says in his discourse so that the various parts of the message move toward

the same definite, specific end.

The conclusion is the climax of the whole sermon in which the preachers one constant aim

reaches its goal in the form of a forceful impression.

The conclusion is not a mere appendage to the body of the sermon nor a series of platitudes

unrelated to the message, but an integral part of the sermon. It is the final portion of the sermon in

which all that has been previously related is concentrated in force or intensity to produce a vigorous

impact upon the congregation.

It should not contain any new arguments because its purpose is to emphasize, reaffirm,

establish, or finalize that which has already been declared in the sermon with the object of bringing

the hearers to heed the message given.

Some preacher forget the importance of the conclusion with the result that their sermons, which

otherwise are carefully and thoroughly prepared, fall at the crucial point. Instead of concentrating

their material into a burning and powerful focus, they allow the current of thought to be dissipated

by common place or feeble remarks at the close.

A good conclusion can even make up for deficiencies of some other parts of the sermon or

else serve to heighten the impression which the previous portions of the sermon may have made

on the congregation.

Because of the importance of the conclusion the preacher should give the utmost care to its

preparation and seek in every possible way to make the final impression powerful and decisive.

Forms of Conclusion!

1. Recapitulation!

The restatement of the main ideas of the sermon at the close serves to remind them of the

basic features of the message and prepares them for the final thrust of the message. It is not a

mere redundancy ‑‑ but a reemphasis of the impression given during the message so as to bring

the one main truth of the sermon to a focal point.

2. Illustration!

Here the preacher uses a powerful and apt illustration as the conclusion. By this means the

great spiritual truth of the messages is brought vividly to the congregation. When the preacher

uses an illustration of this kind it should be unnecessary for him to add many more words, if any, to

the conclusion.

The illustration, forceful and meaningful in itself, should generally be a sufficient conclusion.

3. Appeal or Application!

Most sermons end with a direct application or appeal in which a call is made for a response to

the truths delivered in the message. A moral obligation is imposed upon the individual or an

incentive is given for him to respond personally to the challenge which is presented.

A simple, quiet, natural ending is usually far more impressive and effective than an emotional or

pathetic appeal in which the preacher works himself into a fever of excitement or strong feelings.

Rebukes or solemn warnings are more apt to be received by the congregation if they are

spoken in loving tenderness rather than with thundering denunciation and vehemence.

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Principles for the Preparation of the Conclusion!

1. It should usually be reasonably brief.

2. The conclusion should be simple.

3. The final words of the conclusion should be carefully and thoughtfully chosen.

4. The words should be appropriate ‑‑ fitting the content of the message, its

purpose or aim and for the desired effect on the congregation.

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Lectures to Preachers and Speakers!

THE PREACHER AS A MAN

1. He Must be Saved and Know It.

2. He Must Know that He Has Been Called of GOD to PREACH.

Spurgeons four ideas of a man called of God to preach:

a. He Must Have An Intense Desire For the Work.

b. He Must Have An Aptness (ability) to Teach.

c. He Must Have A Measure of Conversion work in Ministry.

d. He Must Be Acceptable to People of God.

3. He Must Have a Knowledge of the Word of God.

If the preaching is the center of our ministry, and the Word of God is at the center of our

preaching, then the study of the Word of God ought to be at the center of our lives.

4. He Must Have Convictions Based on Scripture ‑‑ feel deeply!

5. He Must Love Gods People ‑‑ for love begets love.

6. He Must Have Common Sense ‑‑ being able to first analyze a program or need and then

to make a decision.

7. He Must Have a Consistent Prayer Life.

8. He Must Be Patient.

9. He must Not Be Greedy of Filthy Lucre.

10.He Must Be a Good Spiritual Leader of His Own Home.

Perils of the Preacher!

1. Undue Familiarity With Divine Things ‑‑ Lev. 10:1,2 ‑‑ treating Gods things lightly.

2. Inconsistent Living ‑‑ Rom. 2:21,22

3. Neglecting Spiritual Development ‑‑ Song of Sol. 1:6

4. Callousness to the Needs of Others ‑‑ be concerned

5. Professionalism ‑‑ (it is seen in . . . )

a. just doing things out of a sense of duty

b. thinking you are too good for your people

c. getting beyond the suggestions of your people

6. Compromise . . .

a. with sin in your own life

b. with sin in the lives of your people

c. opposite sex‑‑dont cast dishonor upon a lady; dont ruin your testimony.

d. business dealings ‑‑pay your debts, the world does not owe you anything.

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The Preacher and His Message!

Proper Preaching... pointers to consider, the need of:

1. Biblical Convictions

2. Aggressively Standing for Truth

3. Growth ‑‑ soul winning

4. Unity of Purpose

5. Morally Clean

HOMILETICS ‑‑ The greatest compliment you can pay a sermon is that it moved souls to the

kingdom of His Righteousness

Use of Good Illustrations!

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. They Help to Make the Message Clear

a. Some people think in pictures, other in words.

b. Making the message clearly understood ‑‑ for it is first step towards persuading

someone to act upon the message.

2. They Make Preaching Interesting

3. They Make a Lasting Effect

a. Depend upon them for lasting effect.

b. Dont use the same illustration too often

4. They Make Repetition Possible Without Weariness

(And you get variety when using several illustrations.)

5. They Help to Bridge Difficult Situations

(Prepare people for a controversial topic, etc.)

6. They Assist Argument

a. Illustrations are not substitutes for thoughts and facts; they lead to

clearer thinking.

b. We dont establish our theology by what we see. What we see can help us

clarify the theology we find in Gods Word.

SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Bible

2. Personal experience

3. General reading

a. Current reading, books of all kinds, biographies and autobiographies

b. History, science, travel, geography, fiction, poetry

4. Hearing, be accurate in repeating what you have heard.

5. Imagination

TYPES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Story ‑‑ factual, specific incidents, hypothetical or possible situations.

2. Comparison or contrast

3. Examples

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4. Quotations ‑‑ quote accurately, dont lie; give credit to who said it.

5. Statistics ‑‑ dont abuse them

6. Figures of Speech. (Use phrases your people use in your culture or area.)

a. Metaphors b. Similes c. Proverbs d. Slogans e. Maxims

7. Poetry ‑‑ Hymns too (Dont read them ‑‑ stay out of rhythmic patterns.)

MISTAKES WHEN USING ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Making the illustration the point

2. Explaining the illustrations, ‑‑ apply, not explain

3. Glorifying self

4. Neglecting the setting

5. Using illustrations that get the thought on side issues‑‑ major on majors not on

minors.

6. Using illustrations you dont understand

7. Using those that imply or teach false doctrine or false ideas

8. Using those that lift up improper, evil or sinful men, or people, or ideas.

FIVE IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND IN PREACHING ‑‑ it is ‑‑

An oral address

to the popular mind

upon Scriptural truth

truth closely examined and studied

with the desire to persuade.

Five Parts of a Sermon or Message!

I. THE TEXT

1. Definition: Any part of the Bible selected for a textual sermon or an exposition‑‑ the text

does not exist for the sermon, but the sermon for the text.

2. Advantages of a Text

a. Gives authority to the message

b. Keeps the preacher from mind‑wandering

c. Gives unity

d. Prepares the hearer for following thought

e. Promotes Variety

3. Selecting Text

a. Be Careful ‑‑ Inspiration guarantees the truth of the record, but not necessarily

the truth of the sentiment expressed.

b. Carefully consider the spiritual needs of the people.

\* Make constant application

\* Youll be blessed if you truly are used of God to meet needs through

insights to peoples need.

c. Consider cycle of truth preached

\* Keep preaching up to date

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\* Dont ride a hobby or favorite text

d. Choose those you have ability to deal with

e. Dont be afraid of familiar texts

f. Daily Bible study is essential

Interpreting the text:

1. Is the text literal or figurative ‑‑ especially consider the Book of Revelation

2. To interpret in light of context consider these questions!

a. Who made the statement?

b. To whom was it make?

c. Circumstances and purpose?

e. Ask ‑‑ Who, When, Where, How, What and Why?

3. Interpret in light of language

a. Exact words ‑‑ what it means to one does not always mean the same as

what it means to another.

b. Watch grammatical construction ‑‑ key words

4. Interpret in the light of general teaching of the Scriptures

a. Never base a doctrine on some isolated verse.

b. An obscure statement should not nullify a clear definite one.

The context principle:

Statement of Concern: We must interpret a given passage in the light of the text which

surrounds it. There are contexts of diminishing importance as one proceeds from that which is near

the text to that which is farther removed.

The context includes the following:

1. Verses immediately surrounding it

2. The chapter where it is found

3. The section of the Book of the Bible in which it is found

4. the entire book of Bible in which it is found.

5. If it is in the Gospels ‑‑ Epistles ‑‑ etc.

6. If it is found in the Old or New Testament

7. The Bible as a whole

8. The Culture or Geography which has some impact

Interpret in the light of Biblical manner and customs Dont spiritualize text too much but be sure

what it says and clearly means. Be guided by the Holy Spirit for the best commentary on the

Bible is the Bible itself.

II. THE THEME

1. Definition:

a. the central idea which is to be brought in the message or sermon.

b. the proposition clearly stated

c. the most striking truth contained in the text

2. Choice depends on ones major emphasis in the sermon

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3. Methods of stating theme

a. Logical ‑‑ stating in a complete thought:

Examples:

The new birth is essential to entrance into Gods Kingdom.

The coming of Christ is imminent.

Advantage: Clear thinking is important on the part of the messenger

b. Rhetorical ‑‑ (may be easier) Asking questions to guide the listeners

thinking. Advantages: Freedom, and variety of treatment.

III. THE INTRODUCTION

1. Sources:

a. From the text itself in the light of its context or historical setting.

b. The author and circumstances under which it was written

c. By comparing the text with other portions of the Scriptures.

d. By an arresting question that arouses the attention and provokes the thought.

e. By reference to Biblical manners and customs

f. Use of a story which throws light on the text

g. The present occasion

h. Secular history

i. A quotation

f. Poetry or a hymn

(A person may want to use some of these in combination ‑‑ The introduction will run between 8

and 12% of lesson or sermon, but in a shorter sermon, the ratio must be larger.)

2. Purpose of Introduction

a. Awaken interest in theme

b. Help surmount the obstacles to interest such as: boredom; other interests ;

Why did you bring that up? or How did you make that out; or so what?

c. Secure the goodwill of audience, help them to want to listen.

IV.THE BODY OR DIVISIONS ‑‑ or the Discussion

1. The Purpose ‑‑ The introduction and conclusion are not points of the

outline of the sermon.

a. The subject is easier to remember when presented in an orderly way.

b. Planning the message keeps the speaker to the theme.

2. Rules Governing Divisions

a. Be clear and distinct ‑‑

b. They should possess order, movement, and progress

c. Cumulative ‑‑ gain strength and value as you move along

d. Natural ‑‑ dont bend Scriptures for division

e. Not too many in number ‑‑

\* How many can the audience handle?

\* How many does the text give?

f. Must be orderly

\* The abstract before the concrete

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\* The conviction before the appeal

\* The false ‑‑ proceedeth the true ‑‑

knock down falsehood immediately!

If errors infects the life it is very difficult to root it out!

Dont read unbiblical theories, ideas, ideals unless you can refute it with Scripture.

3. Divisions are stated by a series of ‑‑ propositions, phrases, questions, or key words.

(Dont mix the above or you will miss clarity.)

4. Modes of presentation of the sermon

a. Explanatory ‑‑ logical and chronological order

b. Observational ‑‑ series of observations from the text not necessarily in order.

V. CONCLUSIONS:

1. Types of conclusions:

a. direct appeal

b. practical application

c. final summary

d. appeal to imagination

e. illustration

f. contrasting the truth to the false ‑‑ only as a contrast

g. repeat the text again

h. compare to other portions of Scriptures.

2. Avoid

a. apologies

b. humor

c. adding a new point of division

d. sameness

Use of Sermon Titles

1. Chief advantage: ‑‑ advertising

2. Selecting the title

a. Avoid fantastic and sensational

b. Dont promise more than you can deliver ‑‑ ( dont let the title reflect on God.)

3. Should be designed to:

a. Catch eye ‑‑ short and brief

b. Arouse curiosity

c. Awaken desire

4. Ways to state the title

a. An arresting question

b. Common phrases

c. Interesting to picture

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Preparing the Sermon!

GATHERING THE MATERIAL

1. Begin early and labor intensely

2. Maintain consistency ‑‑ disciple yourself to work ahead

3. Write down all you think you can use

4. Proper sequence ‑‑ check all sources

a. Read text often in light of context

b. Take time in preparation

c. What do others say?

5. Analyzing the material

a. Preliminary analysis

b. Limit yourself to a theme

c. Define your terms, goals, aims,

d. Discrimination ‑‑ make a difference where the Word does.

e. Classification ‑‑ similarities,

f. Qualifications ‑‑ what do you know?

g. Validation ‑‑ check it with Gods Word, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

OUTLINING THE PORTION

1. Basic Plan ‑‑ notice

a. Time ‑‑ take chronological sequence into consideration, what happened

first, second and last, etc.

b. Look for problem solving

c. Cause and effect

d. Compare the familiar with the unfamiliar

e. Move from the simple to the complex

f. Simple enumeration

2. Basic Goals ‑‑ take into consideration the:

a. Unity and theme

b. Order and progress

c. Symmetry and proportion

3. Basic Mechanics

a. Write out central idea and purpose in text

b. Get main points in logical order

c. Develop main points by explanation, and illustration

d. Prepare introduction

e. Prepare conclusion

f. Revise, rework, inject new ideas, condense,

g. Pray over constantly

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Types of Biblical Preaching!

I. BIBLE READINGS

1. Procedure ‑‑ Take a topic and look up all the Scriptures passages that

would bear on it, listing in some precise order, going from one passage

to another commenting and illustrating briefly. (No text as such)

2. Value ‑‑ It presents a lot of Scripture passages on a single topic or idea.

II. TOPICAL PREACHING

1. Procedure ‑‑ Gets the topic from various texts and then treats it as the Bible treats it. Fewer

main points and more complete development than in the Bible reading method.

2. Types of topical preaching

a. Biographical or character studies

b. Doctrinal messages, facts

c. Ethical

e. Bible books

3. Objection ‑‑ much topical preaching deals with topics from human sources

or human wisdom ‑‑ or based on a favorite subject of the speaker.

III. TEXTUAL PREACHING

1. Procedure ‑‑ Breaks up the text into its homiletical parts and treats each part of the text as

one of the main divisions of the sermon. Should be clearly on the germ ideas of the text in its

context.

2. Value ‑‑ gives a careful word by word exegetical study

IV. EXPOSITORY PREACHING

1. Procedure ‑‑ Seeks to find the true grammatical‑historical‑contextual meaning in a text and

then one seeks to apply it.

2. Things it is not ‑‑

a. Mere rambling comment

b. Mere exegesis or analysis

c. Just pure explanation (all though it includes all these above.)

3. What it is ‑‑

a. The topic and main division plus the whole development stays within the

passage to teach just what that passage teaches.

b. Its structure does not depend upon the order of ideas or verses in the

Scripture passage, but rather upon the best way to explain, illustrate

and apply the passage.

4. Ways to handle a passage from an expository standpoint

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a. Work at explaining exactly what the text is saying.

b. A key‑verse could be used as the ext and the whole passage is interpreted

in the light of that verse.

c. Picture painting or making it real as you deal with some narrative section of the

Old Testament ‑‑ as part of the expository

5. Five Essentials

a. Unity

b. Stable structure

c. Mastery of details

e. Practical application

f. Only use other Scriptures as supplementary

Exegesis ‑‑ correct reproduction of thought as conceived in the mind of original writer.

Analysis ‑‑ separation into parts

Passage Explanation ‑‑ giving the sense or meaning

V. THE COMMENTING METHOD ‑‑ used by Dr. Ironsides

1. Procedure ‑‑ sermon structure at a minimal; comments verse by verse.

2. Objections ‑‑ comments are likely to be trite; comments are not properly

distributed; it may not be important facts that the message is build on.

The theme makes the message valid!

VI. PURE EXPOSITION

1. Procedure ‑‑ explanation built around analytical outline. Does no rearranging, omitting or

balancing of text, absolutely none.

2. Value ‑‑ Only helps those people who are already strong in the Word.

3. Background Study ‑‑

a. the writer

b. the speaker

c. the addresses or statement given by speaker in the Word.

d. the time and date

e. the place

f. the occasion

g. the aim

h. the literary form

i. the historical setting

j. the revelational stage Survey from ‑‑ telescopic to microscopic or from

looking at the Scriptures as a whole to the fine details of it.

Expository Preaching!

1. Exposition as a method of study in scriptural analysis brought into the synthesis of biblical

context.

2. Theological truth is worthless without obedience!

3. Bible exposition without moral application is ineffective.

4. Truth for just truth sake is dangerous for without love it does not reach the heart.

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5. Any preacher can get along with his people by just feeding them.

G. Campbell Morgans method of expository preaching!

Survey Read Impression

Condense Think Outlining

Expand Work Analysis

Dissect Sweat Knowledge

RUTH ‑‑ FAITH AMID FAITHLESSNESS

example

Choice of Faith, 1, 2 Venture of Faith, 3 Reward of Faith, 4

I. Naomis sorrows I. Naomi (vs 1‑5) I. Redemption

(1:1‑3) ( 4:1‑12)

II. Ruths choice II. Ruth (vs. 6‑9) II. Marriage

(1:14‑22) (4:13a)

III. Boazs field III. Boaz (vs. 10‑18) III. Issue

(chap 2) (4:13b‑ 22)

R. A. Torrys verse by Verse Method

1. Do not put anything into your analysis that is not clearly in the verse. No matter how true,

precious, or Scriptural a doctrine is, do not put it in your analysis when it is not in the verse.

2. Find ALL that is in the verse ‑‑ study!! Read, reread, and pray for the Holy Spirits

guidance.

3. State what you do find as accurately and exactly as possible. Do not be content with

putting into your analysis something similar to what is in the verse. (Dont just say the same thing as

what is written, put it in your own words.)

Example ‑‑ Character sketch:

1. What sort of man was this?

2. What made him that sort of man?

3. What resulted from his being that sort of man?

Ideas about exegetical exposition:

1. Make a word study of original language if that is possible.

2. Theme: example (some qualities of an ideal young preacher)

I. A Integrity Character ‑‑ approved

a. tested

b. stamped

c. sterling ‑‑ solidly true and pure

II. A Conscious Walk in Truth ‑‑ needeth not to be ashamed

a. not ashamed of His word now

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b. cannot be ashamed of it in the future.

III. Moral Earnestness ‑‑ study give diligence

a. an intense desire

b. tireless effort

IV. Full Consecration to His Word ‑‑ a workman

a. a volunteer service

b. a grateful service

c. a rewarded service

V. Surrendered Life ‑‑ shew thyself

a. a surrender by choice

b. a surrender completely

c. a surrender once for all

The Invitation

If men dont understand their lost condition and what they are in their sin ‑‑ theyll never see

what Christ Is in His salvation and provision!

There is no more important work in the ministry than bringing a person to

Christ!

I. Excuses for not giving an invitation!

1. The sovereignty of God and the Work of the Holy Spirit.

2. I do not know how.

3. No energy left after the sermon.

II. The Need of Giving an Invitation

1. The Invitation itself Be absolutely honest; dont argue over the method;

a. Watch out for these deceits in giving the invitation

\* Invitation hymn deceit (last verse‑ pressure, now, now, now.)

\* Counselor deceit (motive of using counselors to get others to come down

the isle.)

\* Yes, I see that hand deceit. (Saying you see hands when you dont.)

\* Close the eyes deceit. (Saying nobody sees the hands when the

counselors are told to go to the ones with hands up.)

\* The testimony deceit (using false testimonies.)

b. Give opportunities for decisions to be made.

c. Give a definite invitation, make it clear.

d. Give it in faith, expecting the Holy Spirit to work in lives.

2. The Invitation Hymn

a. Familiar

b. Vary the choice of the hymn.

c. Use of Personal Workers

\* Trained individually,

\* Do not be conspicuous‑ move quietly

\* Do not talk too loudly

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\* Avoid embarrassment

\* Avoid familiarity in touching person.

\* Never speak roughly, always in love, if person doesnt respond leave

him alone, never pressure.

\* Only one worker per person at a time

\* Dont preach the sermon

3. The Inquiry Room

a. Prepared room with prepared workers

Have one in charge

Chairs arranged in 2s.

Have materials for counselors ready.

b. Easily assessable

c. Women with women; men with men

women or men with boys, not men with girls

Facts About Preaching

PRIVILEGE OF PREACHING

1. Proclaiming of Absolute Truth ‑‑ the Word of God

2. Changing of lives through the Word of God

3. Establishing changed lives by the Word of God

PRINCIPLE OF PREACHING

1. Scriptural

2. Unity ‑‑ begins with theme

3. Strong structure ‑‑ outlining is a process

4. Explanation ‑‑ Description

5. Interpretation ‑‑ meaning/ principle/ what is taught

6. Argumentation ‑‑ sharing opposing views when important

7. Reproof ‑‑ showing sin

8. Rebuke ‑‑ dealing with Gods judgment promised

9. Exhort ‑‑ Urging to forsake sin

10. Illustrations

11. Applications ‑‑ Applying truth.

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Expository Preaching

Adapted from materials written by: Dr. Charles W. Koller (President Emeritus of Northern Baptist

Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL) ...Baker Book House...1962

Scriptural Concept of Preaching!

Concerning the Messenger:

1. His CALL: In the Old Testament the preacher was a prophet. This title is derived from the

Greek prophetess which means one who is called by God, one who has a vocation (from God).

Thus the prophet was a man who felt himself called by God for a special mission, in which his will

was subordinated to the will of God. This was was communicated to him by direct inspiration.

In the New Testament the preacher was an apostle, one sent from God, like John the Baptist.

(John 1:6.) Literally he is a godsend. The preacher is at best an earthen vessel (II Cor. 4:7),

through whom God reveals Himself to others.

2. His CHARACTER: In the ministry character is decisive. The Holy Spirit will not identify Himself

with the unclean or unconsecrated. (Isa. 52:11; I Sam. 3:19‑20)

It must be remembered that the fruitfulness or sterility of a mans ministry depends not nearly

as much upon his native ability, his training skill, and his labor, as upon that which the Lord adds or

withholds.

3. His FUNCTION: (II Cor. 5:20) He is the living embodiment of the truth to which he seeks to

win others. He is an ambassador for the King of Kings. He may not have the eloquence of a ready

tongue, but will have that eloquence which is of the heart.

Concerning the Message:

1. Its CONTENT: All true preaching rests upon the basic affirmation, Thus saith the Lord! As he

faithfully communicates the Word of God he speaks with authority. He is supplying something for

which there is no substitute.

The Bible is not a record of mans religious discoveries. It is the record of Gods unfolding

revelation of Himself, by the spoken word, by His intervention in nature, and in history, and finally

by His own entrance into the world as the God‑man, Christ Jesus. (Gal. 1:15‑16; Eph. 1:19)

2. Its POWER: (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:16; Matt. 28:20; Mark 16:20) The gospel is the power of

God unto salvation, the Word of God is quick and powerful. It carries the thrust of a lancet, and

along with it the balm that heals the soul.

But everything depends upon the fidelity of the preacher and the purity and completeness of

the message which is communicated, and upon which the promise of power is conditioned. As he

opens the Scriptures unto the people he must be in fully in tune with the purpose and spirit of the

Bible. He must reverence it, love it, and live it, if he is to share it powerfully.

3. Is AIM: It general, all Biblical preaching aims at persuasion to godliness. Preaching is personal

witnessing with the aim of communicating faith and conviction. The sermon should be the meeting

place of the soul with God.

In all Biblical preaching God seeks primarily, through His messenger, to bring man into

fellowship with Himself. (Acts 9:6; 22:10; 4:12; John 10:9)

The aim is to bring about salvation experience, (Acts 16:31) ‑‑ consecration, (Rom. 12:1,2) ‑‑

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indoctrination, (Eph. 4:14) ‑‑ comfort, (I Thess. 4:18) ‑‑ strengthening, (Col. 1:11) ‑‑ conviction,

(Acts 4:20) ‑‑ and action, (James 1:22).

Preaching should aim to communicate the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Homiletical Means!

The Six Rhetorical Processes:

1. Narration 2. Interpretation

3. Illustration 4. Application

5. Argumentation 6. Exhortation

The Seven Interrogatives ‑‑‑ method of asking questions about the text!

1. Who ?‑‑ Introducing a sequence of person to be enumerated, identified,

classified, or included in the application.

2. Which? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of things, choices, or alternatives.

3. What? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of meanings, implications, definitions,

particulars, characteristics, inclusions, or exclusions.

4. Why? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of reasons or objectives.

5. When? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of times, phases, or conditions.

6. Where? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of places or

whence? ‑‑ place, origin, source, cause?

whither? ‑‑ place, goal, results, extent, conclusions or wherein?

7. How? ‑‑ Introducing a sequence of ways.

Steps in Preparing an Expository Sermon!

1. Gather the preliminary data‑‑ Use of the Bible, cross references, marginal notes, probable

dates, use a Bible concordance, Bible dictionary, Bible atlas, and Bible commentaries.

a. The speaker or writer ‑‑ what kind of person?, character, age, etc.

b. The persons addressed ‑‑ who ?, what kind? (saved, unsaved?)

c. The time ‑‑ when?, significance about the time?, etc.

d. The place ‑‑ where? exact, or approximate, significance?

e. The occasion ‑‑ what were the circumstances which prompted or called

forth the message?

f. The aim ‑‑ particular immediate aim, and how it applies to us?

g. The subject ‑‑ what was the subject the Biblical writer wrote about?

2. Make a brief analysis of the Scripture text. Discover the structural pattern. Careful analysis will

usually reflect the main thrust, the primary emphasis of the passage, etc.

3. Ascertain the key word, and find parallel points or lessons answering to the same key word.

4. Identify your ‑‑ theme, thesis, proposition, basic affirmation, statement, and central idea.

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5. Build your outline ‑‑ main points and sub‑points. Develop your outline with the use of the

homiletical means given above.

6. Prepare an Introduction and Conclusion.

7. Develop the illustrations that are fitting.

8. Look for the following:

a. Any change of persons speaking, or addressed, or otherwise involved.

b. Any progression or successive stages as to time, place, action, or incidents. (Cf Luke

15:11‑32.)

c. Any enumeration of examples or instances (such as instances of divine providence in Acts

7:2‑53).

d. Any cumulative enunciation of ideas, principles, or teachings (as in I Cor. 13).

e. Any pairing, grouping, or parallelism of ideas, on the basis of similarity.

(See Psalm 19.).

f. Any contrast, opposition or interchange of ideas. (See I John 4:1‑5.)

g. Any indication of cause and effect. (See Matt. 25:34‑43.)

h. Any division of the whole into its parts (as of the body, as found in I Cor. 12).

i. Any repetition of certain clauses, phrases, or words, (as by faith as found in Heb. 11).

j. Any transitional clauses or phrases; or connective words such as: therefore, moreover,

nevertheless, finally, else, thus, but, and, or!

The Basic Appeals to Biblical Preaching!

The preacher is to make an appeal to the hearers conscience. God desires to speak through

the preacher and His Word ‑‑ instructing,urging, encouraging, approving, correcting, warning, and

rebuking.

1. Appeal to Altruism, or the regard for others.(See Deut. 5:9; Luke 15:7,10.)

2. Appeal to Aspiration, the universal hunger for spiritual happiness. (See Luke 23:42; Matt.

19:20.)

3. Appeal to Curiosity, the novel, unfamiliar, or every mysterious. (See John 1:47; John 4:10;

Luke 19:5.)

4. Appeal to Duty, the divine urge to do a thing because it is right, or to refrain from a thing

because it is wrong. (See Matt. 23:23; Acts 5:29; Luke 13:14.)

5. Appeal to Fear, for the prophets of old used this approach often. (See Acts 9:4, 6; Acts

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16:29; Luke 12:16‑21; Acts 5:11.)

6. Appeal to Love, love of God, love of others, and love of self. (See Matt. 22:37‑40; Luke

10:27; II Cor. 5:14; I John 4:19.)

7. Appeal to Reason, as the prophet Samuel reasoned with his people. (See I Sam. 12:7; Isa.

1:18; Acts 17:17)

The Preachers Vocabulary!

The thought process are largely confined within the limits of ones vocabulary. And to increase

the range of ones thinking, it is necessary to increase the vocabulary by means of which ones

thinking is articulated.

Tests of more than 350,000 persons from all walks of life show that, more often than any other

measurable characteristic, knowledge of the exact meanings of a large number of words

accompanies outstanding success.

A rich vocabulary is a mighty asset in the pulpit, enabling the preacher to project an idea from

his own mind into the minds of others without loss or blur. In developing such a vocabulary, three

aims are to be kept constantly in mind.

1. Accuracy!

2. Clarity!

3. Refinement!

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Basic Bible Principles - Preaching the Gospel

There are several Greek words translated preach in the New Testament. Two of the most

common, following Strongs transliteration, are euaggeliz¯o and keruss¯o. According to Strong, euaggeliz¯o is made up of the Greek word eu, meaning good, and aggelos, meaning angel or messenger. It is the verb of the Greek word euaggelion, which means gospel or good news. For this reason euaggeliz¯o is sometimes translated not just as preach but as preach the gospel. Keruss¯o simply means to preach, proclaim or publish. An example of where the two words occur together is found when the Lord Jesus quoted a prophecy about himself from the words of Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel [euaggeliz¯o] to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach [keruss¯o] deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach [keruss¯o] the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk. 4:18,19).

Preaching in the Old Testament

The deliverance of which the Lord Jesus was speaking in Luke 4 is the deliverance from the captivity of sin and death. The need to deliver people from this prison is a theme of preaching from Genesis onwards. As Peter shows, those to whom Noah preached were spiritually in a prison:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water (1 Pet. 3:18‑20).

Paul confirms that the idea of preaching, and the gospel itself, are to be found in Genesis:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal. 3:8).

The Lord Jesus and the disciples preached primarily about the Kingdom: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . . (Mt. 4:23); And [Jesus] sent [the twelve] to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick (Lk. 9:2). After Christs death and resurrection the content of the preaching was expanded to include things about the Lord Jesus Christ as well. The Kingdom and Jesus Christ are por‑trayed in Scripture as the two main themes of preaching:

But when [the Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women (Acts 8:12);

. . . preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him [Paul] (28:31).

The command to preach

Preaching is essential because it is the way in which others are able to believe in the gospel: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14).

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The disciples were given a command to preach to all the world: And [Jesus] said unto them [the eleven disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15). This command was fulfilled before the end of the Jewish commonwealth in A.D. 70: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Mt. 24:14). In fact the command had been fulfilled by the time Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians: . . . if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister (1:23).

When the Kingdom of God is established the gospel will once more be preached to all the world: And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6).

Although the command to preach to all the world was long ago fulfilled by the apostles, brethren and sisters should still be a shining light to those around them:

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven (Mt. 5:14‑16);

but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15);

preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2).

We have a responsibility to preach to others about the coming judgements of God upon the earth:

But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchmans hand (Ezek. 33:6).

Christ said: Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give (Mt. 10:8). Unlike the twelve apostles, to whom these words were addressed, we have not received the Holy Spirit to enable us to perform miracles, but we have received freely the gospel. We should therefore freely give to others the good news of the Kingdom.

How should we preach?

We should:

preach to all who will listen (Acts 28:30)

preach with confidence (v. 31)

not preach with wisdom of words (1 Cor. 1:17)

only preach the true gospel (Gal. 1:8)

preach with sincerity and goodwill (Phil. 1:15)

be blameless and harmless and shine as lights in the world (2:15)

preach with warning and teaching (Col. 1:28).

http://www.testimony‑magazine.org/back/PreachingTheGospel.pdf

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See PDF - Basic Bible Principles - Preaching the Gospel

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How To Preach Without Results - Charles G. Finney by Keith and Melody Green

Edited and paraphrased by Keith and Melody Green

Let your supreme motive be to increase your own popularity ‑ then, of course, your preaching will be suited for that purpose, and not to convert souls to Christ.

Avoid preaching doctrines that are offensive to the carnal mind, lest they should say to you, as they did of Christ, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" (John 6:60)

Make no distinct points, and do not disturb the consciences of your hearers, lest they become alarmed about their souls.

Avoid all illustrations, repetitions, and emphatic sentences that may compel your people to remember what you say.

Avoid all heat and earnestness in your delivery, lest you make the impression that you really believe what you say.

Address the emotions, and not the conscience, of your hearers.

Be careful not to testify from your own personal experience of the power of the Gospel, lest you should produce the conviction upon your hearers that you have something which they need.

Do not awaken uncomfortable memories by reminding your hearers of their past sins.

Denounce sin in general, but make no reference to the specific sins of your present audience.

Do not make the impression that God commands your listeners here and now to obey the truth. Do not let them think that you expect them to commit themselves right on the spot to give their hearts to God.

Leave the impression that they are expected to go away in their sins, and to consider the matter at their convenience.

Dwell much upon their inability to obey, and leave the impression that they must wait for God to change their natures. Preach salvation by grace, but ignore the condemned and lost condition of the sinner, lest he should understand what you mean by grace, and feel his need of it.

Preach the Gospel as a remedy, but conceal or ignore the fatal disease of the sinner.

Do not speak of the spirituality of God's holy law (by which comes the knowledge of sin ‑ Romans 3:20), lest the sinner should see his lost condition and flee from the wrath to come.

Make no appeals to the fears of sinners, but leave the impression that they have no reason to fear.

Preach Christ as an infinitely amiable and good‑natured being, but ignore those scathing rebukes of sinners and hypocrites which so often made His hearers tremble.

Encourage lots of church socials, and attend them yourself.

Make it your great aim to be personally popular with all classes of your hearers.

Aim to make your hearers pleased with themselves and pleased with you, and be careful especially not to wound the feelings of anyone.

Especially avoid preaching to those who are present. Preach about sinners, but not to them. Say "they," and not "you," lest anyone should take your subject personally, and apply it to their own life, securing the salvation of their soul.

http://www.lastdaysministries.org/Groups/1000087748/Last\_Days\_Ministries/Articles/By\_Charles\_G/How\_To\_Preach/How\_To\_Preach.aspx

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Dales Cone of Learning - Edgar Dale - Professor of Education Ohio State University

See graphic \*\*\*

Edgar\_Dale's\_cone\_of\_learning

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edgar\_Dale%27s\_cone\_of\_learning.gif

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H. E. Cardin - Teaching "Moses Style"

Moses can not go to the promised land (Deuteronomy 32:52). So now he is about to leave words that will go where he can not. Moses' words gives us a pattern for teaching. Read them in Deuteronomy 6:4‑9. First, love God. Teach children. The method is to teach them formally (7), informally (7), use public reminders (8) and private reminders (9).

1. Formal teaching (verse 7)

Did you know that 50 percent of the knowledge of a child is acquired by age three? It is 75 percent of a child's knowledge that is acquired by age seven. What if there is no formal teaching. They missing out on the most important years while their mind is like a sponge.

The average Jewish child receives 355 hours of religious training each year. Roman Catholic children receive about 200 hours of training compared to barely 30 hours for Protestant children. This is why the Catholics say, "Give us a child until he is seven years of age and the child will die a Catholic."

A Sunday School class and Children's Church is formal teaching. Family devotions can be structured formally. Think about what is not being taught? We are teaching that what isn't taught isn't important enough to teach. The formal teaching is more teacher to child. You, the teacher, are setting the agenda.

2. Informal teaching (verse 7)

We are told to "talk of them" which is a casual child to teacher approach. The student/child is setting the agenda. It's taking those special moments of teaching opportunity. Jesus, the master teacher would take moments and turn them into messages.

Jesus is eating at a Pharisees house and a woman enters. She anointed His feet, washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36‑50). The Pharisee complained. Jesus turned this into a teaching moment complete with story, quiz and application.

This is not just a gift but something that can be developed. Ask the spirit to see those "karios" moments. (Karios is the Greek word for time meaning strategic specific windows of opportunity.)

3. Personal reminders (verse 8)

You know all of those "take home" items you work on? These are personal reminders that suspend themselves on refrigerators with little magnets and cling themselves to Scotch tape on bedroom walls. Whenever they look at those items or use them, it helps to burn the message in the mind. These serve to preach, teach and remind in places where you can not go.

4. Public reminders (verse 9)

These are the posters in your teaching room. These are the symbols in the church like the cross, the baptistery, the communion table, and the offering plates to name a few. If the items are tied into the message, these public reminders are branded into their little sponges (brains that is).

Are you teaching Moses Style?

(Idea from Seven Laws of the Learner, by Bruce Wilkinson, pp175‑180.)

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