

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

Shepherds Global Classroom exists to equip the body of Christ by providing curriculum for rising Christian leaders around the world. We aim to multiply indigenous training programs by placing a 20-course curriculum tool into the hands of spiritual trainers in every country of the world.

This course is available for free download at <https://www.shepherdsglobal.org/downloads>

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Directions for Class Leaders

If studying as a group, you may take turns reading the material. You should stop periodically for class discussion. As the class leader, you are responsible to keep discussion from wandering from the material being studied. It is helpful to have a time limit for each discussion period.

Discussion questions and **in-class activities** are indicated by this symbol ►. Whenever you come to one of these, ask the question(s) that follows it, and let students discuss the answer. Try to make sure that all students in the class are involved in the discussion. If necessary, you can call on students by name.

Much **scripture** is used in this course. Some scripture is printed in the text. Scriptures referenced in parenthesis support the statements in the text. It is not necessary to read these verses.

Each lesson ends with **assignments**. Assignments should be completed and reported before the next lesson time.

At the end of some lessons, each member of the class will **prepare a sermon or Bible lesson to present to the rest of the class**. In the case of presentations, give time at the beginning of the next class meeting for the presentations. Use the **assessment form** at the back of this book to evaluate these sermons and to help the students improve their speaking ability. (We recommend that you make copies of this assessment form for use in class.)

Most lessons will include **test** questions. At the end of each class, the leader may review these questions with the students. The following class session should begin with a test over these questions. Tests should be taken without referring to the course book, written notes, Bible, or classmates. A test answer key is available for download at www.shepherdsglobal.org.

Depending on the style of your class, you may choose to do only the assignments and omit the test questions. You can adapt this part of the course to the learning style of your students.

If students want to **earn a certificate from Shepherds Global Classroom**, they should attend the class sessions and complete the assignments. A form is provided at the end of the course for recording the assignments completed.

Lesson 1

A Theology of Communication

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Understand the importance of communication in God's kingdom.
- (2) Recognize ways in which God communicated within the Trinity, with other spiritual beings, and with humanity.
- (3) Appreciate the variety of ways in which Jesus communicated while on earth.
- (4) Recognize the ability to communicate as part of God's image in humankind.
- (5) Respect the power of the human tongue to accomplish good or evil.

Introduction

Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another. Communication includes preaching, teaching, one-on-one conversations, writing, drama, and other ways of sharing information between individuals.

For preachers and teachers, communication is especially important. If a mechanic cannot communicate well, we do not worry. If he can repair a vehicle, we are happy. A good cook does not have to be a good conversationalist. He simply needs to know how to prepare good food. A farmer does not have to know how to talk if he knows how to plant, cultivate and harvest crops.

However, a preacher or teacher must be able to communicate. The call to preach or teach is a call to communicate. Because of this, preachers and teachers should know more about communication and public speaking than most people.

The three major forms of communication for Christian leaders are preaching, teaching, and writing. This course will focus on these three forms.

Being able to communicate does not mean that every teacher or preacher must have the ability of a president or famous speaker. There are many different styles of communication. Some people become very good communicators, even though they are not great public speakers. The goal of this course is to prepare better communicators for serving God's kingdom.

In this first lesson, we will see that communication is important in God's kingdom.

God is a Communicator

God is a personal God who communicates with others. Unlike the impersonal gods of many religions, God is a communicator. The Bible shows God's communication within the Trinity, communication with angels and even Satan, and communication with human beings.

The Father Communicates with the Other Persons of the Trinity

At the beginning of the Bible, we read,

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.... Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Genesis 1:3, 26).

Who was God talking to? God was talking to God. One person of the Trinity was talking to another person of the Trinity; "Let us..."

During the days of Noah, God communicated within the Trinity.

And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Genesis 6:6-7).

We do not know how the persons of the Trinity communicated with one another, but as rational beings, they communicated with each other.

God Communicates with Spiritual Beings

The book of Job tells about a conversation between God and Satan.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it" (Job 1:6-7).

We do not know much about this conference, but we know that the Lord communicated with Satan, a spiritual being.

When David was judged for improperly conducting a census (Exodus 30:12), God communicated with an angel. The angel was bringing judgment through the land. When the angel came to a certain field, the LORD commanded the angel to put away his sword (2 Samuel 24:16, 1 Chronicles 21:27). God communicates with spiritual beings (Zechariah 1:13).

God Communicates with People

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so (Genesis 1:27-30).

When God created human beings, he made them in his own image. Part of that image was the ability to communicate. God spoke to Adam and Eve. In this passage, he gave them two commands. People learned their responsibilities through communication.

All through the Bible we see God continuing to communicate with human beings.

- He communicated with Adam and Eve by walking and talking with them in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8).
- He communicated with Abraham by taking the form of a man and visiting him in the heat of the day (Genesis 18:1-3).
- He communicated with Joseph through a dream (Genesis 37:5).
- He communicated with Moses through a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4).
- He communicated with Samuel through a vision (1 Samuel 3:4-15).
- He communicated with David through a prophet (2 Samuel 12:1).
- He communicated with Joseph through dreams (Matthew 1:20, Matthew 2:13, 19, 22).
- He communicated with Mary through an angel (Luke 1:26-28).
- He communicated with Jesus through a voice from heaven (Matthew 3:17).
- He communicated with Peter through a trance (Acts 10:10-16).
- He communicated with Paul through visions (2 Corinthians 12:1-7).
- He communicates with us today through his Spirit (Romans 8:16).

Jesus Is a Communicator

Jesus Spent Much Time Communicating

About half of the words in the gospels are Jesus' words. More than 500 times, the gospels show Jesus speaking, asking questions, and answering people. Other times, we see him listening as other people talk. Note some of the communications of Jesus:

- He communicated with friends.
- He communicated with his family.
- He communicated with his disciples.
- He communicated with a lady at the well.
- He communicated with the thief on the cross.
- He communicated with people in a synagogue.
- He communicated with a woman caught in adultery.
- He communicated with the sick and handicapped people.
- He communicated with Pilate, Herod, and his other accusers.
- He communicated with great crowds, including 5,000 at one time.
- He communicated with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and other groups.

Notice some of the ways Jesus communicated:

- He sang.
- He taught.
- He praised.
- He rebuked.
- He preached.
- He counseled.
- He told stories.
- He gave lectures.
- He gave proverbs.
- He asked questions.
- He gave compliments.
- He answered questions.
- He offered object lessons.
- He recited the Old Testament.
- He prayed in public and private.
- He sent students on practice missions.

In addition to spoken communication, Jesus used dramatic communication. Many of Jesus' actions were designed to communicate. Once he bent down and wrote on the ground (John 8:6). We do not know what he wrote, but the act of writing communicated something.

When Jesus drove the money changers and businessmen from the Temple, he was expressing unhappiness over what they were doing (Matthew 21:12-13). On another occasion, Jesus cursed a fig tree. The cursing of the fig tree was not judgment on the fig tree, but was a means of communicating a message to his disciples (Matthew 21:18-22).

Each of Jesus' miracles was designed to teach something. They were designed in part to authenticate the message of Jesus. An ordinary person cannot do the things that Jesus did. The fact that he could do them meant that he was not an ordinary person.

The role of communication in the ministry of Jesus, who was completely and fully God, shows the importance of communication. Communication is a way we accomplish what God has designed and called us to do.

God Has Given Humans the Ability to Communicate

Communication is Part of the Image of God in Humans

When God created man, he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). We do not understand all aspects of the image of God in humanity, but part of this image seems to be the ability to communicate.

Inanimate objects have no ability to communicate. A blowing wind and a flowing river make sound, but sounds do not imply communication. Communication requires intelligence, and inanimate objects do not have intelligence.

Animals have a limited ability to communicate. They can alert one another to danger. They can communicate that food is available. However, they are not capable of the detailed communication of humans.

Communication is an important part of our humanity. We do much of our daily work through communication. We pass along the wisdom of one generation to another through communication. We entertain ourselves through communication.

We correct others through communication. Nathan corrected David with a story. Paul corrected the Galatians with a letter. We compliment others through communication. Paul's letters often began with a compliment. Communication is important to humanity.

God Forbids Abuses of Communication

Like other aspects of God's image in humanity, the ability to communicate can be abused. The devil cannot create; he can only distort what God has created. Satan tries to distort our ability to communicate. Lying, gossip, and slander are distortions of communication.

God forbids us from:

(1) Lying.

- "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25).
- "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices" (Colossians 3:9).
- "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit" (Psalm 34:13).
- "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander" (1 Peter 2:1).

(2) Slandering.

- "You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people..." (Leviticus 19:16).
- "Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law" (James 4:11).

(3) Blaspheming.

- "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people" (Exodus 22:28).
- "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven" (Matthew 12:31).

(4) Cursing or abusing.

- "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them" (Romans 12:14).
- "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire" (Matthew 5:21-22).

Biblical Principles for Communication

The Bible gives some principles for using our words to accomplish good and avoid harm.

(1) Don't talk too much.

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent (Proverbs 10:19).

Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent (Proverbs 17:28).

Don't talk too much. An excessive talker does not properly value either his own words or others' words. He says things that he doesn't really mean, and he assumes that other people do the same. He gives opinions without knowledge. You don't have to give an opinion about something you don't know; not every opinion is of equal value.

(2) Don't speak before you think.

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger (James 1:19).

A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. (Proverbs 29:11).

Don't let your feelings cause you to make statements that you will regret.

(3) Don't judge a situation at first sight.

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame (Proverbs 18:13).

Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears (Proverbs 26:17).

Many conflicts are based on misunderstandings. Listening carefully can usually resolve them. Be slow to judge a situation. If a person with a reputation for honesty says something that seems wrong to you, don't be quick to judge him.

Avoid conflicts that are not your responsibility. You may not have enough information to make a wise decision.

(4) Be careful with humor.

Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!" (Proverbs 26:18-19).

Because of the effect of our words, uncontrolled humor is like a weapon in the hands of a crazy man. Don't cause people to make mistakes because of your joke. Don't tell them you are serious when you are not – they will not believe you again.

Don't make fun of physical defects. Don't joke about someone's failures. Don't tell jokes that make sin seem trivial.

(5) Be careful with correction.

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend... (Proverbs 27:5-6a).

There is a right time and a right way to correct a person. Make sure your correction is intended to build, and not to destroy. Make sure your correction is private, not public.

Demonstrate that you care about the person you are correcting and that you want to help them. A healthy relationship is important before your correction will be received.

(6) Keep your speech pure.

Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:4).

Don't tell about scandals unless you are responsible to deal with the situation. Don't tell jokes that you must tell secretly. Unbelievers use sexual terms or terms for private body parts in their exclamations, but that is not appropriate for a Christian. It is irreverent to use terms referring to God or Jesus as an exclamation because of stress unless you are sincerely calling upon God for help.

(7) Don't divide people with your words.

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends (Proverbs 16:28).

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases (Proverbs 26:20).

Don't try to make yourself look better at another's expense. Don't cause conflict between others. Don't hurt the effectiveness of someone's ministry by gossip.

Before speaking, ask not only "Is it true?" but also "Why should I say it?"

Most Valuable, Most Dangerous

An ancient legend tells of a king who sent his servant to find the most valuable thing in the kingdom. After weeks of searching, the servant returned and said, "Your Majesty, the most valuable thing in your kingdom is the tongue. With the tongue, a wise person is able to convince other people to act wisely; a righteous person is able to convince others to do what is right. The tongue is the most valuable thing in your kingdom."

The king then sent his servant to find the most dangerous thing in his kingdom, so they could get rid of it. A few weeks later, the servant returned and said, "Your Majesty, the most dangerous thing in your kingdom is the tongue. With the tongue, a fool can convince those around him to act foolishly. With the tongue, an evil person can convince others to do evil. The tongue is the most dangerous thing in your kingdom."

- Read Psalm 15. From this psalm, list wrong ways in which we can communicate.
- Read James 3:1-12. Discuss the power of the tongue both for good and for evil.

Communication Can Be Used for Good

James says that every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). Communication is one of God's gifts to us. There are many wonderful things that we can do with this gift:

- We can pray.
- We can praise God.
- We can worship God.
- We can comfort others.
- We can encourage others.
- We can teach truth to others.
- We can correct those who are doing wrong.

God has chosen to use human communication to expand his kingdom.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Paul gave the young Timothy advice on using communication for good.

- "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).
- "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil" (2 Timothy 2:24).

We Are Responsible for Our Communication

We are responsible to communicate with God.

God created human beings with the ability to communicate with him. Scripture points to many ways in which we communicate with God in a positive way:

- Speak to God (Genesis 17:18, Exodus 3:11, Numbers 22:10, Judges 6:36).
- Pray to God (Genesis 20:17, Luke 6:12, Acts 4:24, Romans 15:30).
- Cry out to God (Exodus 8:12, Psalm 57:2, Psalm 77:1).
- Make a vow to God (Numbers 21:2, Numbers 30:2; Ecclesiastes 5:4).
- Appeal to God (Deuteronomy 15:9, Job 5:8, Romans 11:2).
- Give glory to God (Joshua 7:19, John 9:24, Romans 4:20).

- Sing to God (Judges 5:3, Nehemiah 12:46, Psalm 47:6-7, Psalm 59:17, Colossians 3:16).
- Call to God (Psalm 4:1, Psalm 55:16).
- Give praise to God (Psalm 66:20, Luke 5:26, Luke 17:18).
- Present requests to God (Daniel 9:20, Philippians 4:6).
- Give thanks to God (Luke 2:38, Acts 27:35, Romans 14:6).

Scripture also warns against negative ways that people communicate with God:

- Blaspheme God (Exodus 22:28).
- Curse God (Job 2:9).
- Lie to God (Acts 5:4).
- Mock God (2 Kings 19:16).

We are responsible for our communication with each other.

God created us not only to communicate with him, but with one another. We can communicate in both positive and negative ways; we are commanded to bless those who persecute us; to bless and not curse them (Romans 12:14). Note some positive ways we are to communicate with each other:

- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:25).
- Teach one another (Colossians 3:16).
- Instruct one another (Romans 15:14).
- Greet one another (Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12).
- Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16).

We are warned to avoid harmful communication:

- Don't deceive one another (Leviticus 19:11, Ephesians 4:25).
- Don't judge one another (Romans 14:13).
- Don't slander one another (James 4:11).

We are responsible to communicate the gospel.

Jesus gave his disciples responsibility to take the gospel to the whole world. God's people should communicate the gospel to unbelievers through evangelism. The primary means through which God has chosen to spread the good news of Jesus Christ is through spoken communication. Jesus told his disciples,

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

Conclusion

Since communication is such an important part of God's image in human beings, it is essential for Christian leaders to understand the art and practice of communication. This course will help you appreciate different forms of communication. It will equip you to use communication skills to serve more effectively in God's kingdom.

Lesson 1 Assignments

- (1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.
- (2) Present a three-minute speech to the class in which you talk about the ministry to which God has called you. You may talk about your current ministry as well as your vision for the future.

Lesson 1 Test

- (1) What are the three major forms of communication for Christian leaders?
- (2) With whom does God the Father communicate?
- (3) List four abuses of communication God forbids.
- (4) What is the primary means through which God has chosen to spread the good news of Jesus Christ?

Lesson 2

Principles of Communication

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

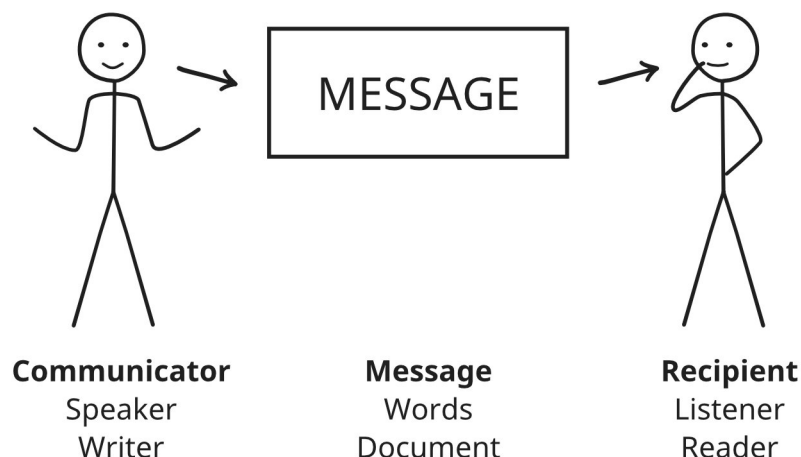
- (1) Identify three components in communication.
- (2) Recognize two places at which communication can break down.
- (3) Understand the expectations for different forms of spoken communication.
- (4) Recognize the unique characteristics of written communication.
- (5) Avoid hindrances to successful communication.

Introduction

If we were computers, communication would be easy. We could plug a cord into the mind of one person and a cord into the mind of the other person, press a button and the communication would transfer quickly and without error. However, God has not chosen for man to communicate in that way. God has a much better plan. In fact, God has designed communication to be one of the most enjoyable experiences in life.

Have you noticed that God has made the activities that are necessary to life enjoyable? It is necessary for us to eat to have strength, so God has made eating enjoyable. It is necessary for us to have rest to renew our strength, so God has made rest enjoyable. In a similar way God has made communication enjoyable. It is a joy and pleasure to communicate and build relationships with other people.

Communication involves three components: the communicator, the recipient, and the message. The person who is communicating gives a message to be received by a second person.



Two Reasons A Message May Not Be Successfully Communicated

A Communicator May Not Communicate Clearly

There is no perfect communicator. All of us have thoughts that are difficult to express. It is even sometimes difficult to express ourselves to God. That is why the Holy Spirit helps us with our prayers, expressing things we do not know how to express (Romans 8:26). Regardless of how skillful people are as communicators, they are never able to express everything in their minds. Sometimes communication fails when a speaker is trying to choose his words or when a writer is trying to write a document. We have communication problems anytime the communicator and the recipient use words differently. Communication can fail because of the writer or speaker.

A Recipient May Not Understand the Message

Most of the time, a recipient cannot concentrate well enough to understand everything another person is saying, either in spoken or written communication. Even if one understands all the words, it is difficult to understand the complete communication because small distinctions between words change from one person to the other. Communication can fail because of the listener or reader.

Even if a teacher is a good communicator and a student is a good recipient, some of the original message will be lost between the teacher and the student. Our task is to reduce misunderstanding and improve communication.

Communication is one of the most important things we do each day. God has made us as creatures who are constantly creating and receiving communication.

Good communicators are constantly learning more to improve their ability to communicate. If we do not continue to learn and grow, we will not be effective and interesting communicators.

What Are the Different Forms of Communication?

Spoken Communication

One-on-One Communication

One person speaking to one other person is the most intimate and usually the most successful form of communication. In this type of communication, it is easy to determine if the other person understands you. You have instant feedback that enables you to measure the success of the communication. You can use various explanations to successfully transfer information from you to another person.

This is the most relaxed and natural form of communication.

Small Groups

This is the kind of communication we experience in families, at work, and in informal social gatherings. Small group communication can include anything from family conversations to more formal settings such as a Sunday School class. To many people, addressing a crowd creates anxiety and discomfort. However, those same people often speak to family gatherings, informal gatherings of friends and other small groups without much stress.

Public Speaking

In public speaking, a communicator addresses a large group of people. This kind of communication is nearly always formal, even though there may be an informal atmosphere. Speaking to large crowds of people is the most efficient way of communicating the maximum amount of information in the shortest period of time. Church services, political rallies, and other large gatherings all use this kind of public speaking. When speaking in these settings, it is difficult for a speaker to determine whether individuals in the audience are understanding the message. Miscommunication is more likely to occur. Most people feel that public speaking is the most difficult form of spoken communication.

Informal Communication

Most of us are involved in informal kinds of communication every day. Most informal communication requires no preparation; one simply responds to situations in a natural way. Even in informal situations, some people are more gifted than others at expressing themselves.

Formal Communication

Formal communication is usually for occasions that are planned in advance. Formal communication requires that the speaker prepare his presentation in advance. Formal communication often creates anxiety and fear on the part of the presenter, especially when the person is not accustomed to speaking publicly. Preaching, lecturing and similar presentations are formal presentations.

Formal communication can take place in small groups or in one-on-one situations. If you are invited to meet the governor, this will likely be a formal situation. You should prepare for that meeting as seriously as if you were addressing a large crowd.

Written Communication

Written communication has many of the same characteristics as spoken communication, but some characteristics are unique to written communication:

1. **Written communication is often shorter than spoken communication.**

Written communication usually has a limitation of length that is not necessary in

spoken communication. Because of this a written letter is usually shorter than a phone conversation.

2. **Written communication is often more precise than spoken communication.** The fact that a person must take time to write out his communication usually means that the communication is more precise. Because written communication will be examined more closely, the writer is often more careful to be completely accurate.
3. **Written communication tends to be more formal than spoken communication.** Since the recipient is not in front of the writer, one tends to use a more formal means of communication than if the person was in the immediate vicinity.
4. **Written communication often has more impact than spoken communication.** Spoken communication may not have as much authority as written communication. In legal situations, communication is not official until it is written.
5. **Written communication lasts longer than spoken communication.** If someone speaks out loud, it is easy to forget what was said. However, if someone has written something, that message could continue to communicate as long as the piece of paper exists.

In some situations, written communication is more effective than spoken communication. To be a good communicator, a person needs to develop writing skills as well as speaking skills.

Using a Variety of Communication Forms

In addition to speaking and writing, we can communicate with drama, pictures, music, bodily movement, touch, and actions. Most educators agree that the most effective teaching uses multiple forms of communication. If a person hears a message and then sees the message reinforced with a picture or object lesson, he will learn much more. Some researchers say that:

- We remember 10% of what we read.
- We remember 20% of what we hear.
- We remember 30% of what we see.
- We remember 50% of what we see and hear.
- We remember 90% of what we do.

This illustrates the point that multiple forms of communication increase learning. When we supplement one form of communication with another form of communication, we enhance our effectiveness.

► Evaluate your ability to communicate. Which type of communication is your strength: written or verbal, small or large groups, formal or informal? In which of these are you weak?

Factors that Influence Communication

There are many things that influence the success of our communications.

The Message

The nature of our message will have a great impact on the communication. For example, there is a big difference between a funeral message and a birthday greeting. There is a great difference between a presentation about HIV/AIDS in Nigeria and a presentation for a college graduation ceremony. There are differences between a sermon, a formal academic presentation, and a speech at a political rally.

The length of the message will also influence the message. As strange as it might seem, the shorter the message, the more one must work on the message to make sure it communicates the important points within the time constraints. If one is to make an important presentation in a few minutes, it may require a lot of preparation.

A man once asked U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower how long it would take him to prepare a speech. He replied, "If you want a 15-minute speech, give me two weeks. If you want a 30-minute speech, give me a week. If you want an hour speech, give me two or three days. If you want a two-hour speech, I am ready right now." His point was that if you have only a limited amount of time, you must work very hard at getting it just right.

Preparation

Most public speakers need to spend significant time preparing a presentation. There is usually a direct relationship between the impact of a presentation and the preparation that went into it.

One of the biggest reasons many sermons have limited impact is a lack of preparation. Many people depend upon their natural ability to get them through a sermon. We should take every speaking engagement seriously. Some people write out every word they are going to say in public. It takes longer to do this kind of preparation, but the reward is in the effectiveness of the presentation.

The Environment

The environment of a presentation affects the way one prepares and presents the message. If one is speaking at an outdoor evangelistic crusade in a village, he will prepare much differently than for a conference of pastors in a hotel room. When accepting an invitation to speak, it is essential to learn as much about the physical environment as possible.

The Circumstances

One needs to know about the circumstances that led to the invitation. For example, the author of this course was asked to speak on the "Philosophy of Christian Education" for the staff of a school. He learned that the school board was rethinking their philosophy. Circumstances had changed over the last 60 years, and it was time for the school to make sure that they understood their mission. Knowing this background helped him prepare his presentations.

The Audience

Several factors about the audience influence communication:

- **Age.** The attention span of children is not as long as that of an adult. You may need to shorten your speech or use special techniques to keep the attention of children.
- **Gender.** Women have different interests than men. Therefore, you will prepare differently for a male or a female audience. A mixed audience forces you to prepare in an even different manner.
- **Interests.** If you are speaking to a group of lawyers, you will prepare and speak differently than if you were addressing a group of athletes. One should always take into consideration the specific interests of the audience.
- **Education.** If you are giving an academic paper to a group of university lecturers, you will approach the presentation differently than if you were teaching a Bible lesson to a class of 12-year-olds.
- **Health and strength.** A pastor's wife speaks to senior citizens each week. These people are old and weak and do not have the attention span of healthy young people. She prepares and delivers her message differently than if she were addressing a young audience.
- **Duration.** The time available for the presentation will determine the preparation for the communication. A salesman who is given 10 minutes to make his case will speak differently than if given one minute.

Because these factors affect one's preparation and delivery, one should try to get as much information as possible about the audience when accepting a speaking engagement.

Hindrances to Communication

Fear of Public Speaking

Many people's greatest fear is the fear of public speaking. There are soldiers who are fearless in risking their lives in battle, but who are terrified when asked to say a few words in front of 15 or 20 people.

The best cure for fear of public speaking is experience. The more one speaks in public, the more likely he will become comfortable speaking in public. When a well-known public speaker was complimented for his public speaking skills, he smiled and said, "I get a lot of practice." Experience is necessary for becoming comfortable as a public speaker.

Lack of Adequate Preparation

We have already talked about the importance of preparation. Lack of adequate preparation is one of the greatest causes of unsuccessful public speaking. What are some of the common problems speakers have with preparation?

- **Poor introduction.** If a person does not start well, it is not likely that the presentation will go well.
- **Poor conclusion.** A good conclusion is just as important as a good introduction. This is the last thing the audience will hear; they will remember the conclusion.
- **Poor illustrations.** One of the most important parts of any public presentation is the use of illustrations that help the audience understand the message.
- **Poor organization.** Good communication develops in an organized way. A disorganized speaker may say many good things, but the audience may not understand his primary message.

All of these are issues related to preparation. We may not be able to avoid nervousness when we step to the podium. We may not be able to control the environment in which we speak. However, we can do something about a good introduction and a good conclusion. We can control the illustrations in our presentations, and we can control the organization of our presentations. These things are an important part of preparation.

There is no substitute for good preparation. It is unprofessional to fail to prepare well for a public presentation.

Failure to Be Sensitive to the Audience

Public speaking is more than communication in one direction, from speaker to listener. A good public speaker is always conscious of the response of his audience. The best way to do this is to establish good eye contact with the audience. A good public speaker can see in the eyes of his audience whether or not he is successfully communicating. When a speaker realizes he is losing the attention of his audience, he must do whatever is necessary to get their attention back. Here are some things the speaker can do:

- Stop speaking and wait. A period of silence will get the attention of the audience.
- Tell a story. A story helps to recapture attention. Sometimes you may need to tell a story sooner than you had planned.
- Give a startling fact or statistic.

- Use humor.
- Give a practical life application of your topic.
- Use an object or write on a board.
- Interact with someone in the audience.
- If the audience is sleepy, have them stand and stretch.
- If the audience is sleepy, have them sing a chorus or song.

A speaker must constantly be aware of distractions. If a person walks into the classroom or if there is a commotion outside the classroom, it is better to stop speaking until the distraction is removed. When 50% of the audience is looking at the person who has entered late, you need to stop and wait.

When there is a distraction in the classroom, sometimes it helps to make a little joke. You can say: "I am going to wait a minute for you to see the person who has walked in because he is more interesting than me. I am a teacher and teachers know that there is no reason to keep talking when there are distractions. As soon as you are satisfied seeing your brother, I will continue." The people will usually laugh and turn their attention back to you.

Keeping the Attention of Your Listeners

Duane Litfin lists 10 things that will help keep the attention of our audience.¹

(1) Surprise. Our attention is drawn to things that are different from what we expect.

When an expert in the Law of Moses asked Jesus, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered with a story that had a surprising ending. The story of the Good Samaritan had a despised Samaritan as the hero of the story (Luke 10:25-37). This story kept the attention of Jesus' listeners!

(2) Movement or activity. When all else is still, movement will capture our attention; likewise, when all else is moving, something stationary will often stand out. It is the contrast that captures our attention.

To show his displeasure with the injustice of the religious leaders in the Temple,

Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons (Matthew 21:12).

Do you think Jesus captured the attention of the people in the Temple?

¹ Adapted from Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking, 2nd Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 47. See also page 239.

(3) Closeness. Current events or things that happen near us will gain our attention.

While Jesus was teaching,

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Jesus responded by teaching a lesson based on this current event and another recent tragedy that had occurred in Siloam (Luke 13:1-5). He knew that recent events capture the attention of listeners.

(4) Visibility. Something specific we can see usually attracts our attention better than something abstract, general, or ordinary. This is why illustrations are important. When Jesus taught, he pointed to concrete items to illustrate his teaching.

- "It is like a grain of mustard seed" (Mark 4:31).
- "Show me a denarius" (Luke 20:24).
- "Look at the fig tree" (Luke 21:29).

(5) Familiarity. In a setting where things are unfamiliar and unknown, that which is familiar will usually stand out to us.

To teach a lesson about our response to God's Word, Jesus pointed to a familiar scene in his world – a farmer sowing seed in a field. "A sower went out to sow" (Matthew 13:3).

(6) Conflict. In a condition of harmony and peace, opposition between two or more things tends to grasp our attention.

Repeatedly, Jesus emphasized the differences (the conflict) between his teaching and the teaching of the Pharisees and other religious leaders. This drew the attention of the crowds. "And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching" (Matthew 22:33).

(7) Suspense. When we have the entire picture except a few key pieces, we are attracted to the missing pieces to see how the whole fits together.

When the religious leaders criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, he began to tell a story. He told of a runaway son who decided to come home (Luke 15:11-32). The people listening would have been waiting to know: What happens to this son? Will his father reject him? Will the community run him away because he has shamed them? What will happen to this rebellious son? Jesus knew how to create suspense.

(8) Intensity. When something stands out as more intense than those things surrounding it, we will normally pay attention to it.

Repeatedly, the people who heard Jesus teach recognized the power and authority in his teaching. The intensity of his teaching amazed his listeners. "And they were astonished at

his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

(9) Humor. At the heart of almost all humor is something that is not where or what it is supposed to be. Humor will nearly always claim our attention.

Jesus' listeners must have laughed when he said, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

(10) Relevance to daily life. Things related to our basic needs and everyday experiences and emotions tend to interest us.

When Jesus was preaching to ordinary people with little money or savings, he talked about the things that they needed in daily life.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink.... And why are you anxious about clothing?... Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:25, 28, 31, 33).

Jesus spoke to the basic needs of life.

Failure to Develop a Central Theme

Failure to clearly develop a central theme is one of the two most important problems with many sermons and other public speeches. Listen to a Sunday afternoon conversation:

Thomas: "Did you enjoy church this morning?"

Sarah: "Yes, it was good."

Thomas: "Was the sermon good?"

Sarah: "Very good!"

Thomas: "What was the sermon about?"

Sarah: "Uh, he talked about sin and about heaven and about a broken-down car that he saw yesterday. He said many good things."

The pastor said many good things, but there was no unified message in the sermon. This harms the pastor's ability to communicate a powerful message. When his listeners go home, they do not remember a central theme for the sermon. When a person goes away from a sermon or other public speech, he should be able to summarize what the speaker talked about in a few words. If the average person in the audience cannot do that, then the speaker has not really succeeded.

After a person has developed the theme for his presentation, he needs to develop an outline and illustrations and applications that focus attention on the central theme. A preacher's theme or a teacher's objectives provide a goal for the entire sermon or lesson.

It is important to progress from the known to the unknown. Public speakers should start by talking about things with which the audience is comfortable before moving into unknown areas. Good speeches start with something with which the audience is familiar and then flow to the new material. They keep the audience moving towards the main theme of the speech.

Failure to Illustrate Well

A second reason for poor sermons is the failure to illustrate well. Not every person will become a master storyteller. However, if you cannot find and present interesting stories and illustrations, you will not be an effective public speaker.

A public speaker must constantly be looking for good illustrations and must find a way to organize and store them for future use. Finding and adapting illustrations will require more effort than just about anything else. In Lesson 4, we will learn how to develop good sermon illustrations.

Conclusion

Communication is both an art and a science. It is a science in the sense that it can be analyzed and follows certain predictable laws. It is an art in that it can be developed in such a way as to appeal to the aesthetic part of human nature.

Communication is both a gift and an achievement. Most good public speakers have a certain amount of natural ability. However, that natural ability can be developed and improved. God gave us the gift of communication; we should use and develop this gift to the best of our ability.

Lesson 2 Assignments

- (1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.
- (2) Interview another member of your class about their childhood. Ask questions that will give you information for an interesting speech. Then give a three-minute speech to the class in which you introduce this classmate.
- (3) This lesson talks about 10 things that help maintain the attention of our audience. Find a written or recorded sermon to study. Read or listen to the sermon and see how many of these are part of the sermon. Each member of the class should evaluate a different sermon. At your next class meeting, compare ways in which the sermons keep the attention of the audience.

Lesson 2 Test

- (1) What are the three components in communication?
- (2) Name two reasons a message may not be successfully communicated.
- (3) What is the most intimate, and usually most successful, form of communication?
- (4) What is the most difficult form of spoken communication for most people?
- (5) List three of the five ways written communication is different from spoken communication.
- (6) List three of the five factors that influence the success of our communication.
- (7) List three of the five hindrances to communication.
- (8) List three of the ten things recommended for keeping the attention of an audience.

Lesson 3

Introduction to Preaching

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Define preaching and the primary biblical words that refer to preaching.
- (2) Appreciate the power of the preached gospel to transform lives.
- (3) Understand the differences between evangelistic and pastoral preaching.
- (4) Recognize characteristics of the major types of sermons.
- (5) Prepare sermon outlines for each of the major types of sermons.

Introduction

The Bible says that God has chosen to save the world by the foolishness of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21). Preaching is the means chosen by God to communicate his truth both to unbelievers and to believers. Christianity has primarily been spread through preaching.

Preaching has been part of Christianity from the very beginning. John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea (Matthew 3:1). After Jesus' temptation, we read, "From that time Jesus began to preach" (Matthew 4:17). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood and preached (Acts 2:14). Nine times the book of Acts refers to Paul preaching. Preaching continues to be one of the most important responsibilities of Christian leaders.

Description of Preaching

Definitions of Preaching

Preaching is the spoken communication of the truths of Christianity in a public forum with the purpose of achieving change in the listeners.

John Stott said, "To preach is to open up the inspired text with such faithfulness and sensitivity that God's voice is heard and God's people obey him."²

When we preach, we must allow God to speak through us (1 Peter 4:11). His message must be communicated to the audience. Because of this, God's Word, not our opinions, must be the text for our preaching.

² John Stott, "The Privilege of Preaching," available online at <https://johnstott.org/work/the-privilege-of-preaching/>.

Key Words Associated with Preaching

In the New Testament, there are two families of Greek words that refer to preaching. The first family of words can refer to the proclamation of any kind of message, good or bad, judgment or hope. But the second family of words focuses on speaking a positive message, declaring the good news.

Words from these two families of Greek words are used together several times. For example, Matthew 4:23 says that Jesus... "went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming** (G2784)³ the **gospel** (G2098) of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

The First Family of Words Referring to Preaching

1. **(Verb) Officially proclaiming truth** (G2784). "To officiate as a herald or to proclaim after the manner of a herald."⁴ This word is used to describe the ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1), Jesus (Matthew 4:17), the disciples (Matthew 10:7), Philip (Acts 8:5), and Paul (Acts 9:20).

Peter used this word when he described his sermon to Cornelius; Jesus commanded his disciples to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).

2. **(Noun) The message announced** (G2782) "by a herald or public crier, a proclamation by a herald."⁵ This word is used eight times in the Greek New Testament. It has been used to refer to the core teachings of early Christianity:

- Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures that promised a coming Messiah.
- Jesus went about doing good works and performing miracles.
- Jesus was crucified on a cross, died, rose again, and ascended to heaven.
- Jesus will return to the earth someday.
- Repent, believe, and be baptized, and you will receive forgiveness for your sins and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

These doctrines were at the center of the apostles' message. This was the preaching of the early church.

3. **(Noun) The person who delivers the message** (G2783). This word was used to describe a town crier or a public messenger. He was the one who gave official messages from royal or government officials. He was like a presidential spokesman today.

³ The Strong's Concordance numbers for each of the Greek words is listed.

⁴ Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), 346

⁵ Thayer, *Lexicon*, 346

This word is found only three times in the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul used this word when he said that he was appointed as a preacher. In 2 Peter 2:5, this word describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness.

The Second Family of Words Referring to Preaching

There is a second family of Greek words used in the New Testament to refer to preaching. These words all relate to one word (G2097) that means **to bring good news or announce good things**.

The first time that word is used in the New Testament is a good example of the word: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have **good news preached** to them" (Matthew 11:5). The blind, lame, sick, deaf, and poor are the ones who especially recognize that they need good news.

The family of words:

1. **(Noun) The good message that is presented** (G2098). It is not just any message that is preached, but the positive message of Jesus Christ that offers forgiveness of sin and a wholesome life. The Gospel of Mark begins this way: "The beginning of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). Mark wanted his readers to know that the coming of Jesus was something very good.
2. **(Noun) The person who declares the good news** (G2099). This word is translated "evangelist." Philip is described as an evangelist (Acts 21:8) and Timothy is urged to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5).

A Family of Words Referring to Teaching

There is one other family of words that needs explanation, words associated with teaching. The most common word for *teach* (G1321) means to "hold discourse with others in order to instruct them."⁶ This word is used dozens of times in the New Testament, in different forms. Jesus is often described as a teacher (Matthew 8:19, and at least 40 other times). One of the offices in the early church was the position of teacher (Acts 13:1, 1 Corinthians 12:28).

The ability to teach was one of the qualifications of church leadership (1 Timothy 3:2). A teacher was responsible to transfer wisdom and knowledge from himself to another person. Since the early church was a new movement, it needed good teachers who could pass along the new teachings. One of the most important things that Jesus did during his three years on earth was to prepare his disciples to teach the good news.

⁶ Thayer, *Lexicon*, 144

What is the difference between preaching and teaching? Though it is a bit oversimplified, one of the best distinctions between the two is this: **Teaching appeals primarily to the mind** whereas **preaching appeals primarily to the will**.

The goal of teaching is to communicate information. The goal of preaching is to encourage the listener to make some kind of decision. Evangelistic preaching attempts to get the person to make a decision to accept Christ. Pastoral preaching attempts to get a person to make a decision about the subject contained in the sermon. For example, a pastor preached a sermon entitled, "To Whom Much is Given, Much is Demanded." He asked people to realize that God had given them great assets and that they should use those for the glory of God. This is pastoral preaching.

People in a congregation may think a preacher is like a teacher if he has a less dynamic style than they expect from a preacher. However, speaking style is not a good way to distinguish preaching from teaching.

Every good sermon should contain instruction, and most teaching has some kind of practical application that demands a response. The distinction between preaching and teaching is not significant.

Categories of Preaching

There are two general categories of preaching.

Evangelistic Preaching

The purpose of an evangelistic sermon is to inspire the hearer to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Evangelistic preaching is normally directed to unbelievers. Unfortunately, many pastors preach only evangelistic sermons to their church members. While it is appropriate to preach an occasional evangelistic sermon to the church, pastors who only preach evangelistic sermons will seldom see their people grow beyond spiritual childhood. The writer to the Hebrews states, "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance..." (Hebrews 6:1).

Most of the sermons in the Book of Acts are evangelistic in nature. These include sermons to both Jewish and Gentile unbelievers. The first of these was the sermon Peter gave immediately after Pentecost (Acts 2:14-39). An example of a typical sermon to a Jewish audience was given at a synagogue in Psidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41). An example of a sermon given to a Gentile audience is the sermon Paul preached to the philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:22-31).

► Each member of the class should choose one of the sermons from Acts to study. Read the sermon and make a list of the things preached in the sermon. How many of the core teachings of Christianity listed above are contained in the sermon? Discuss and compare the sermons in your class.

Example of an Evangelistic Sermon

Title: Come Unto Me

Text: Matthew 11:28-30

I. WHY SHOULD WE COME TO JESUS?

A. Because of Who Jesus Is

It is fair to ask, "Who is Jesus?" The answer can be divided into two parts.

1. Jesus is man.
2. Jesus is God.

B. Because of What Jesus Is Like

1. Jesus is "meek and lowly." He was a humble person. This suggests:
 - a. He was not a harsh person but a kind and gentle person.
 - b. He was not a rich person but a common person.
2. Jesus is a powerful person.

C. Because of What Jesus Has Promised

1. Jesus has promised to give you rest in your soul.
2. Jesus has promised to make his yoke easy and his burden light.

II. HOW DO WE COME TO JESUS?

A. We Come with Repentance

1. Repentance involves a godly sorrow for sin.

This is the kind of sorrow that David had when he had committed sin with Bathsheba.

2. Repentance involves confession of sin.
3. Repentance involves turning from sin.

B. We Come with Faith

1. Faith is believing in God.

We must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Faith is commitment to God.

C. We Come with Confession

1. Confession is admitting our sinful condition.
2. Confession is completely open before God.

Pastoral Preaching

The purpose of pastoral preaching is to build up and strengthen believers. This is the primary responsibility of a pastor. Pastoral preaching is the most common kind of preaching for Christian congregations.

After persecution started in Jerusalem, the church spread northward to Antioch in Syria. Many Gentiles became believers. The church at Jerusalem heard about this. The following is the account of their response.

The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord (Acts 11:22-24).

Barnabas' ministry in Syria was a ministry to the believers. This verse shows the power of pastoral preaching. Although Barnabas preached to believers, "a great many people were added to the Lord." Good pastoral preaching strengthens believers and enables them to do God's work, including evangelism.

There are many examples in Acts of preaching to unbelievers. However, there is only one example in Acts of a sermon delivered to believers (Acts 20:18-35). This was preached when Paul had invited the Ephesian elders to the seashore to say goodbye. These were all Christians and Paul spoke to them as Christians. Just as this sermon to these Ephesian elders was different than Paul's typical evangelistic sermon, our preaching to believers will normally be different from preaching to unbelievers.

Types of Sermons

There are as many different types of sermons as there are different personalities of preachers. However, sermons tend to fall into several general categories. Any of the methods discussed below can be used for either evangelistic or pastoral preaching.

Topical Sermons

Definition of Topical Sermons

A topical sermon is built around one topic or theme. The goal of the sermon is to make one basic point. The outline of the sermon is developed in a logical way rather than from one particular text. The preacher supports the points of the sermon using texts from several parts of the Bible that relate to the topic.

Advantages of Topical Sermons

In providing biblical support for a topical sermon, one can use the best verses on that particular topic rather than building the point from a single passage of scripture. In a

topical sermon one can develop the theme in such a way that when a person leaves the service, he knows very clearly what was talked about. In many ways, a topical sermon is the easiest kind of sermon to understand. Topical sermons are easier and quicker to prepare than most other kinds of sermons.

Two Dangers Related to Topical Sermons

1. **Misusing scripture.** It is dangerous to create a sermon and then look for scriptures to support the points. It is wrong to use a verse to support a point, when that verse does not actually relate to the point or does not mean what you claim it does.
2. **Becoming unbalanced in preaching.** When preaching topical sermons, preachers are likely to preach what they feel strongly about. This usually means that they are neglecting other important scriptural teachings. On the other hand, when a person does expositional preaching (which is discussed later), the scripture text itself helps to determine the topics and themes.

Example of a Topical Sermon
Title: Many Proofs: A Sermon on the Resurrection Text: Acts 1:1-3 I. The evidence of the empty tomb (Matthew 28:1-7; John 20:1-9) II. The evidence of the post-resurrection appearances (Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:11-29; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8) III. The evidence of changed lives (Acts 4:1-13) * This sermon is from How Sweet the Sound, a collection of sermons by Rev. G.R. French. Used by permission of Gospel Publishing Mission.

Textual Sermons

Characteristics of Textual Sermons

A textual sermon is based on a single text or phrase from the Bible. For example, one might preach a sermon on the text, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). In a textual sermon on this scripture, one might talk about "wages," "sin," and "death." The theme and main points of the sermon usually come from the text. The characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of a textual sermon are very similar to that of a topical sermon, because the preacher may give many ideas that do not come from the text itself.

Africans and African Americans preach textual sermons more than other forms, and they do so very effectively. One of the traditional forms of learning in Africa has been the

proverb, a short memorable statement that teaches some point of wisdom. A biblical text is also a short memorable statement that teaches some point of wisdom. Textual sermons take advantage of that traditional form of teaching; this makes textual sermons attractive.

Example of a Textual Sermon
Title: "To whom much is given, much shall be required." Text: Luke 12:48 1. Our Assets ("much is given") 2. Our Responsibilities ("much shall be required")

Example of a Textual Sermon
Title: Living as God's People Text: Romans 12:1b-2 1. Do not be conformed to the world. 2. Be transformed. 3. The will of God 4. Present yourselves to God.

Biographical Sermons

Characteristics of Biographical Sermons

A biographical sermon is a character study based on someone in the Bible. The sermon explains the person's good or bad qualities and makes application based upon those qualities.⁷

Because people are more interesting than principles, the biographical sermon often holds attention better than other forms of sermons. There are hundreds of people in the Bible from which one can preach biographical sermons. Nearly all of them reflect either some positive or negative quality.

This is a very effective form of preaching in cultures that are accustomed to stories. It is a very natural form of preaching and teaching the Bible.

⁷ Alfred P. Gibbs, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, (6th Edition). (Kansas City: Walterick Publishers, n.d.), 283

Reasons for Biographical Sermons

Most Bible characters are familiar to people who attend church. We identify more easily with the people in the Bible than with general teachings in the Bible. It is easier to see principles in the lives of people than in general teachings. People are interested in people; therefore, biographical sermons may be more interesting than other kinds of sermons.

Method for Preparing Biographical Sermons

1. Quickly read through the scriptures that cover the person, and make notes about their qualities and deficiencies.
2. Select three to eight qualities which are easy to explain.
3. Organize these into an outline that is uniform and consistent.
4. Continue to take notes on the story's details as you reread and study the passage.
5. Once you have selected the main points, find two or three other scriptures that illustrate these same principles.
6. Make specific applications of the principles illustrated in the character you are studying. Make sure that the application is based upon the text. Explain how your listeners can follow a good biblical example or avoid following a bad example.

Things to Avoid in Biographical Sermons

- (1) Do not turn the sermon into an allegory.

An allegory uses the details of the story as symbols of other things. This lesson comes from the speaker's imagination rather than from the scripture itself. Biographical sermons should draw applications from scripture itself rather than from allegorical interpretations.

In the story of David and Goliath, we should not try to present Goliath as Satan, David as Jesus, and the stone as the Word of God. Instead, we should attempt to find positive character qualities in the story. The story of David and Goliath will teach lessons such as courage, faith in God, commitment to a cause, and the principle that God uses weak things to do mighty works.

- (2) Do not make points that are not obvious in the story.

The points drawn out of a story should be natural. When the audience hears them, they should immediately be able to see the point. The more naturally the points arise from the story, the more easily the audience will understand and apply the sermon.

Example of a Biographical Sermon

Title: What Is Your Name?

Text: Genesis 32

In many cultures, a person's name shows their parent's hopes for their child. But the name Jacob was not a name of hope. It meant "heel-grasper" or "deceiver." On the night before he would meet his older brother Esau, Jacob wrestled with God and God transformed *Jacob*, the "deceiver" into *Israel*, "One who strives with God." In this story, we see the process God used to transform Jacob's name, character, and direction in life.

(1) God gave Jacob a revelation of Jacob's nature (Genesis 32:27).

The question "What is your name?" forced Jacob to confess, "I am a deceiver."

(2) God gave Jacob a revelation of God himself (Genesis 32:30).

When Jacob confessed who he was, God revealed himself and his grace in a new way.

(3) God gave Jacob a new future (Genesis 32:28).

Jacob the deceiver became Israel, the father of a nation.

*This sermon is from *How Sweet the Sound*, a collection of sermons by Rev. G.R. French. Used by permission of Gospel Publishing Mission.

Example Series of Biographical Sermons

A series of sermons for spiritual emphasis week:

- (1) Isaiah, a Man God Used
- (2) Jonah, a Man God Used a Little
- (3) Gehazi, a Man God Could Have Used
- (4) David, a Man God Used for Many Generations

Expository Sermons

Description of Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is demonstrated in an incident in Nehemiah. Seven months after the walls of the city were built, the people gathered for a special celebration. One of the most important parts of the celebration was the reading of the Law of Moses. Nehemiah describes the incident this way:

...the Levites helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading (Nehemiah 8:7-8).

The Levites gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. The goal of expository preaching is to make the scripture clear, so that people can understand what is being read.

Expository preaching is explaining the meaning of a passage of scripture and making appropriate application. It explains the most important themes in that passage in the order in which they are found. It does not omit anything from the text, and it does not add anything to it. Expository preaching must have been common in the early church. When churches received correspondence from the apostles, they must have read it publicly and then briefly explained what the various parts of the letters meant.

Expository preaching is the most natural and simple form of preaching.

Types of Expository Preaching

There are many different types of expository preaching. We will divide expository preaching into three categories.

(1) Brief Exposition

In brief exposition, the preacher makes a few comments about each verse in an entire chapter or lengthy portion of scripture. It is basically reading a passage and then making comments about it. In this method, the preacher addresses only the key points of the passage.

In previous generations, African Americans used this form of preaching very effectively. In those days, many preachers were illiterate, so they would have someone stand beside them while they were preaching. The preacher would have the reader read a verse or a phrase in a verse. The preacher would then explain and make applications from the verse. He would then say, "Read," and the reader would continue with another phrase. The preacher and reader would alternate throughout the sermon. This form of preaching became so popular that later preachers who could read continued to use this style of preaching.

You can use this brief exposition style of preaching very effectively at times, particularly with passages like Psalm 73. In this passage, Asaph tells the story of his doubts. He questions the fairness of God who allows the wicked to prosper while the righteous suffer. Asaph starts with doubts, but in the middle of the chapter, he begins to see things from God's perspective. The chapter ends with a great declaration of faith: "But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works" (Psalm 73:28).

One does not need a fancy outline in preaching from this chapter. The “read and comment” technique works very well.

The brief exposition method works well for explaining the responsibilities of the weak and the strong in Romans 14.

(2) Thorough Exposition

In thorough exposition, the preacher explains nearly every word, doctrine, and thought in a text. Because every chapter of the Bible is filled with many truths, this kind of exposition is very detailed. It takes good exegetical skills and tools to preach a passage in such a complete manner.

Think about Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

In this passage, there are many truths we can uncover with careful analysis. Knowing the history and theology of “glory” from the Old Testament, particularly the incident when Moses had to veil his face after being with God on Mount Sinai, helps us understand what Paul is saying. Word studies of the key words such as “glory,” “transformed,” and “image” will yield rich truths. If you do the exegesis properly, there will be more in this one verse than you could preach in a single sermon.

(3) Thematic Exposition

In thematic exposition, the preacher selects a short section of scripture such as a paragraph and explains the key themes in that section. It addresses many more details than the brief exposition but does not explain every word or thought in the passage. In this kind of exposition, the sermon is built around the most important theme of the section. Details that support the theme are used. Details that do not contribute to that theme are omitted or briefly mentioned.

In a sermon on three or four verses, it is difficult to treat every possible thought, but you can explain and apply the main thoughts. Some people believe that thematic exposition is the most natural form of preaching. It enables one to keep a sermon focused, but also to explain the most important truths in the order they come in the passage.

Example of an Expository Sermon

Title: Epaphroditus, an Ordinary Christian

Text: Philippians 2:25-30

Epaphroditus was a layman sent from the Philippian church to assist Paul when he was under house arrest in Rome. Paul eventually sent him back to Philippi with the letter to the Philippians. In that letter he wrote one paragraph describing the work of Epaphroditus.

- The Christian life includes brotherhood: "my brother."
- The Christian life includes work: "fellow worker."
- The Christian life includes fighting: "fellow soldier."
- The Christian life includes serving others: "your messenger."
- The Christian life includes unfortunate circumstances: "he was ill."
- The Christian life includes honor and respect: "honor such men."
- The Christian life includes sacrifice: "he nearly died... risking his life"

Example of an Expository Sermon

Title: When God Does Not Answer Prayer

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:3-10

This is an issue with which people struggle. They want to know why God does not always answer their prayers. According to this passage, God does not answer our prayers for at least three different reasons:

1. To Prepare Us for Service

2 Corinthians 1:4, "Who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction."

2. To Illustrate His Grace

2 Corinthians 1:5-6, note the phrase "your comfort."

3. To Demonstrate God's Power

2 Corinthians 1:9, "But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."

Serial Expository Preaching

A preacher may give a series of sermons from a book or section of scripture, one verse or paragraph at a time. For example, the first sermon of a series on the Gospel of Mark would start with chapter 1:1 and perhaps deal with the introduction to the book. The next sermon might come from 1:2-5 and the next one would come from 1:6-11. The preacher would then develop sermons from the book one paragraph at a time.

This is the kind of pastoral preaching that the author of this course has done throughout most of his pastoral ministry. For example, when he served as a senior pastor of a church, he preached through the following books:

- James in 15 sermons
- 1 and 2 Thessalonians in 25 sermons
- Galatians in 62 sermons
- Philippians in 32 sermons
- Gospel of Mark in 102 sermons

Reasons for Doing Exposition

(1) Expository preaching helps you teach the truth of the Bible.

Expository preaching takes its main points from the text itself in the most natural way. This enables the passage to communicate simply and plainly. Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). One of the best ways to present the truth of the Bible is to go through it one verse at a time and explain what it means.

(2) Expository preaching helps you emphasize what the scripture emphasizes.

If while preaching through Romans, Paul mentions a certain doctrine only once, then you will only preach on it one time. However, if he mentions a doctrine 10 times, then you have the opportunity to mention it 10 times. When you preach through the Gospel of Mark, every time Jesus mentioned prayer, you are able to preach about prayer. Every time Jesus encouraged people to repent, you can encourage people to repent.

(3) Expository preaching helps you to be fresher and more creative.

It is easy for a preacher to get into a habit of preaching the same themes all the time. However, when one preaches through sections of the Bible, he is forced to develop new material. The process of developing new material will keep one learning and growing. It will enable him to go to the pulpit with freshness and enthusiasm.

(4) Expository preaching helps you give your people a varied spiritual diet.

If preachers allow their own personal interests to determine what they will preach, they are likely to preach repeatedly on the same themes. However, if they preach through sections of the Bible, they will be teaching many different topics, and that will give their

people a more balanced spiritual diet. This forces preachers to preach about themes that they would not ordinarily feel comfortable speaking about. This will keep them learning and will aid them in their own spiritual growth.

(5) Expository preaching helps eliminate the problem of knowing what to preach.

Practically every pastor has come to Saturday night and wondered what he or she was going to preach about the following day. When pastors preach through a section of the Bible, they not only know what they are going to preach about the next Sunday but for many Sundays in the future. This is an advantage to the musicians and others who participate in the church service, because they can coordinate their parts of the service around what the pastor is going to preach.

(6) Expository preaching helps you deal with difficult subjects in a natural way.

If pastors know that there is a certain problem in their church, they are tempted to aim their preaching at certain individuals in the congregation. This will cause the minister to lose the respect of the congregation. Many people have left churches because they felt that the minister had singled them out to preach against something they were doing. However, when the minister preaches about the subject that is next in order in the scripture, people should not accuse him of preaching at a certain person. Expository preaching helps you deal with difficult or sensitive subjects in a natural and inoffensive way.

A pastor was amazed to see how God sovereignly worked it out for him to preach on certain subjects at the right time, even though the theme was simply next in order as he was going through a particular book. God knows who will be in our services, and he knows when we are going to preach a certain sermon. He often brings these things together in a way that can only be understood as the work of God.

(7) Expository preaching enables you to preach with greater authority.

When we preach regularly through the Bible, it gives us a level of authority that we do not have when we preach topical sermons. When all the points of a sermon come out of the text in such a way that the listener can easily see them, it helps to convince the hearer that this sermon is from God and not from man. It is easy to say, "Thus saith the Lord" when you are doing expository preaching.

(8) Expository preaching takes maximum advantage of your time and resources.

When you are preaching through one book, all the background information applies to all of that book. You can use commentaries to their maximum advantage. If you preach through a large book like one of the gospels, being able to use the same resources week after week will save time and resources.

A Preaching Calendar

Each preacher has a method with which he is most comfortable. Also, each preacher finds certain topics are easier to preach than others. Preparing a calendar for the entire year is one way to avoid falling into a routine of preaching repeatedly on just a few topics while ignoring other important themes.

Here is a sample calendar that can guide a pastor through important topics for the Christian life. By preaching from different parts of the Bible, it reminds believers that “**All Scripture** is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:16).

A Sample Preaching Calendar

January

Focus on the gospel for unbelievers.

Call believers to evangelism and mission.

Shepherds Global Classroom’s course on evangelism and discipleship may assist you in preparing these sermons.

February

Preach from Psalms.

Focus on the attributes of God.

Call believers to prayer and worship.

Shepherds Global Classroom’s two courses on Christian beliefs and Christian worship may assist you in preparing these sermons.

March-April

Preach from one of the Gospels.

Focus on the life and teaching of Jesus.

Call believers to prayer, fasting, and repentance.

End with the crucifixion and resurrection at Easter.

Shepherds Global Classroom’s two courses on spiritual formation and on the life and ministry of Jesus may assist you in preparing these sermons.

May-June

Preach from Acts or a pastoral epistle (Timothy or Titus).

Focus on Pentecost and the Holy Spirit.

Call believers to active involvement in the local church.

Shepherds Global Classroom's course on the church may assist you in preparing these sermons.

July-August

Preach from a book of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy).

Call believers to see the promise of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Shepherds Global Classroom's two courses on biblical interpretation and on the Old Testament may assist you in preparing these sermons.

September-November

Preach from an epistle of Paul, John, Peter, or James.

Call believers to a deeper walk with God.

Shepherds Global Classroom's two courses on practical Christian living and the holy life may assist you in preparing these sermons.

December

Advent (the four weeks before Christmas) is a season to prepare both for Jesus' first coming (as a baby) and for his future return.

Preach on Old Testament prophecies of Jesus' first coming (Isaiah or Micah).

Call believers to prepare for Jesus' second coming (Thessalonians or Revelation).

End the year by rejoicing in the birth and incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Shepherds Global Classroom's course on eschatology may assist you in preparing these sermons.

Conclusion

God can and does use all methods of preaching. When you preach, you should select the method of preaching that best fits the occasion, the audience, the message, and your own personal style. You should try different styles of preaching to find the style which is best suited to your personality and audience. Remember that the most important job of a preacher is to accurately communicate God's Word and motivate listeners to obey God.

Lesson 3 Assignments

(1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.

(2) To better understand the differences between each type, prepare a written outline for each type of sermon.

- A topical sermon
- A textual sermon
- A biographical sermon
- An expository sermon

(3) Choose one of the sermons you prepared in Assignment 2. Present this as an 8-10 minute sermon to the class. Each member of the class will complete an assessment form found at the back of this course guide. By studying your classmates' assessments, you can evaluate your ability to communicate effectively.

Lesson 3 Test

- (1) How are teaching and preaching different?
- (2) What is the purpose of evangelistic preaching?
- (3) What is the purpose of pastoral preaching?
- (4) Name two dangers related to topical sermons.
- (5) What is a textual sermon based on?
- (6) What is a biographical sermon?
- (7) What is the goal of expository preaching?

Lesson 4

The Mechanics of Preaching

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Learn and practice the steps for preparing sermons.
- (2) Learn and practice the process of outlining a sermon.
- (3) Learn and practice the process of finding appropriate illustrations for a sermon.
- (4) Learn to keep good records of sermons.

Introduction

In Lesson 1, we saw that God is a communicator, and God uses human communication to accomplish his purposes. In Lesson 3, we saw that God has chosen the folly of what we preach to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). In the book of Acts, we see that God worked through the preaching of men like Peter, Stephen, and Paul to reach the world with the gospel.

Preaching is important. We who are called to preach are responsible to preach with as much effectiveness as possible. While power in preaching ultimately comes from the Holy Spirit's anointing, we must prepare to the best of our ability. A preacher should have the goal of being "a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Preaching is a skill that can be developed. Like other skills, preaching uses certain tools and techniques. In the following pages, we will study processes for preparing, presenting, and preserving sermons. Our diligence does not replace the power of the Holy Spirit. However, it prepares us to be used by him.

First Preparation for Sermons

Make Notes

When you know that you will preach on a specific verse or subject, begin to write down any ideas that come to your mind, such as questions, related scriptures, observations, quotations, applications, illustrations, stories, or anything else that comes to your mind. Write these ideas down as you think of them, with no attempt to organize them. You will organize your ideas later, but for now get the ideas written down as quickly and completely as possible.

Write the Theme

The theme is a one-sentence summary of what you want to say in the sermon. The theme helps you focus on what you want to accomplish with the sermon. If you do not have a specific goal, you are not likely to accomplish very much.

Write down several possible themes. Keep writing until you find the best fit for your sermon.

► Practicing the skill. Read the following scripture texts: Galatians 5:16-26, Philippians 2:1-11, and Revelation 3:14-22. For each text, write a one sentence theme that is appropriate for a sermon on the text.

Once you have decided on the theme, everything else in the sermon must be connected to that theme. Every point and sub-point, every illustration, and every point of application must relate in some way to the theme. As you prepare the sermon, you may need to revise the theme so that it better expresses the emphasis of your material.

The theme may be repeated many times through the sermon. At the end of every major point and sometimes even in the middle of the points, you restate the theme. If you have properly developed the sermon, the theme will relate to each section of the sermon.

Use the Theme

Begin writing outline points. Outline points should help explain the theme. Every good outline will have two to five points, so keep writing down points that could become points in your outline.

By now you may have written several pages of information. This information may or may not go into the final sermon, but the notes will stimulate your creativity as you prepare the sermon.

Write a Simple Outline for the Sermon

The outline must be based on the theme.

Every point and sub-point of the outline must be based on the theme you have chosen for the sermon. This helps focus the mind of the congregation on the primary message you want to communicate.

Read Psalm 146 and then study this outline for a sermon titled, "Praise the Lord." The theme of this expository sermon is praise for the Lord.

Notice that all four major points are related to the theme of praise to the Lord. If you are preaching on praising the Lord, it would be inappropriate to throw in a point on the importance of baptism. Each point of the outline must be based on the theme of the sermon.

Example of an Outline for an Expository Sermon

Title: Praise the Lord

Text: Psalm 146

A. We praise God for who he is (146:1-5).

1. He is Yahweh (146:2a).
2. He is Elohim (146:2b).
3. He is the God of Jacob (146:5).

B. We praise God for what he has done (146:6a).

1. God made the heaven.
2. God made the earth.
3. God made the sea.
4. God made everything else.

C. We praise God for what he is doing (146:6b-9).

1. He preserves the truth (146:6b).
2. He executes judgment for the oppressed (146:7a).
3. He gives food to the hungry (146:7b).
4. He loosens the prisoners (146:7c).
5. He gives physical healing (146:8a).
6. He encourages the discouraged (146:8b).
7. He loves the righteous (146:8c).
8. He helps the needy (146:9a).
9. He makes it difficult for the wicked (146:9).

D. We praise God for what he will do (146:10).

1. What will God do? "The Lord will reign forever..."
2. What should be our response? "Praise the Lord."

The outline must have parallel thoughts.

A common mistake for preachers is to prepare outlines that are not parallel. This makes it more difficult for the listeners to follow the thought of the sermon. Look at this sermon outline titled "Jesus Christ: An Understanding High Priest" based on Hebrews 8.

Example of an Outline That Is Not Parallel

Title: Jesus Christ: An Understanding High Priest

Text: Hebrews 8

A. The Priesthood in Israel's Worship

1. Three anointed offices in Israel

- a. The King
- b. The Prophet
- c. The Priest

2. Ministries of the Priest in Worship in Israel

B. Jesus - A Perfect High Priest

- 1. Jesus: a God-made high priest
- 2. Jesus: a perfect sacrifice
- 3. Jesus went directly to God's presence in heaven, the eternal tabernacle

C. Jesus - The Perfect Mediator

- 1. Jesus is the mediator between God and man.
- 2. He has perfect understanding of man and can faithfully represent man before God.

There are two problems with this outline:

- 1. The second and third major points are parallel with each other, but they are not parallel with the first point.
- 2. Under the second general point, there are three sub-points. The first two are parallel; they have "Jesus" with a colon after the word and then a description of Jesus. However, the third point is a complete sentence.

Compare this sermon with the previous sermon, "Praise the Lord." You will see that the earlier sermon is easier to follow.

- 1. Each major point begins with the phrase "We praise God for..."
- 2. The sub-points are parallel with each other:
 - The first set begins with the phrase "He is."
 - The second set has the phrase "God made."
 - The third set has "He" with a present tense action verb like "He preserves" and "He executes."

There are many benefits for writing a clear outline based on the theme of your sermon.

1. **Outlining gives structure to your sermon.** An outline is an organization plan.
2. **Outlining keeps your focus on the main theme.** Without a good outline to guide you, it is easy to stray from the topic. However, a strong outline that is built on the theme will keep the sermon focused.
3. **Outlining helps the listener understand and remember the sermon.** Though they may not see the outline, they will sense the organization. A good outline helps the hearer to remember the sermon longer because the outline reinforces the theme. If we make it easy to remember the message of the sermon, God can speak the truth to the listeners during the days after we preach.

A good outline takes extra work, but it is worth it in the end. This is part of the hard work of being a workman who has no need to be ashamed. Fortunately, the longer you work on it the easier it becomes.

► To understand how a pattern helps us remember information, try memorizing each of the following lists. Which are easier? Why?

Numbers: 24, 15, 3, 30, 9, 6, 18, 27, 12, 21

Numbers in order (count by threes): 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30

Names: Ezra, Cain, Balaam, Gabriel, David, Felix, Adam

Names in alphabetical order: Adam, Balaam, Cain, David, Ezra, Felix, Gabriel

Writing the Sermon

Write an Extended Outline for the Sermon

An extended outline expands the outline that you started with. The extended outline uses complete sentences but organizes thoughts in an outline format rather than a paragraph format. An extended outline is easy to use in the pulpit. When you have the points, sub-points, and other details organized under the point they are supporting, it is easy to see the point and sub-points that need to be made.

Write out the introduction.

You should write out your introduction completely. The introduction is the first thing the audience will hear. If you do not capture the attention of the audience in the first few moments, you may not have an opportunity to get their attention later. Even if you do not write out your entire sermon, it is good to write out the introduction because it is such a crucial part of the sermon.

The introduction of your sermon will usually include the following general items:

- (1) Text from scripture

(2) Opening remarks (sometimes this comes before the text)

(3) Theme

You should write out the theme you plan to use in the sermon. Sometimes you may tell the audience the theme in the introduction; other times you might state it later. However, the theme should stand out in your outline to remind you of what you want to talk about.

(4) Background information

Here you should give background details that the audience will need to know to understand the sermon. This may include background details of the scripture. It may include personal things, such as the way you came to this particular text. It may be a statement about the meeting at which you are speaking, especially if you have been assigned a topic or text.

Expand your original outline with more details.

In this step, you add further details to your original outline. In an extended outline format, you use complete sentences that show every important point in your sermon. The following is an appropriate lettering and numbering scheme for outlining points and sub-points:

Extended Outline Format
I. MAJOR OUTLINE POINT
A. Major Point
1. Sub Point
a. Details
(1) Additional Details
(a) Additional Thoughts
(i) More Thoughts
(ii) More Thoughts
(b) Additional Thoughts
(2) Additional Details
b. Details
2. Sub Point
B. Major Point
II. MAJOR OUTLINE POINT

Find Appropriate Illustrations

One of the biggest differences between a good sermon and a poor sermon is the way they are illustrated. Charles Spurgeon said, "The sermon is the house. The illustrations are the windows that let the light in." Illustrations let light in and make the room more comfortable. A house without windows can be a depressing place.

Stories have many advantages in a sermon.

1. **Stories create interest.** People will often listen carefully when you are telling a story.
2. **Stories increase understanding.** People will often understand your sermon better as a result of a good story.
3. **Stories aid application.** A good story helps your listener understand how to apply the lessons of the sermon in his or her own life.
4. **Stories increase memory.** A listener will remember a story long after they have forgotten the sermon outline. A well-chosen story illustrates the sermon's message clearly so that when a listener remembers the story, it reminds them of the theme of the sermon.
5. **Stories are a natural teaching technique.** People are accustomed to hearing stories and will respond positively to them. The best preachers and teachers are those who can tell good stories. It would be very hard to find a person who does not like to hear a good story.

Jesus was the master user of stories and illustrations. He told stories from history, stories from everyday life, and traditional stories that were well known in his day. He also used word pictures from all walks of life to help his listeners understand his message.

Why did Jesus tell so many stories? Because he is the Creator and understands our nature. He understands that we learn best through stories.

► To understand how stories help us remember lessons, think of each of these stories from Jesus. Without looking the story up in the Bible, can you remember the lesson that Jesus taught using the story?

- The Good Samaritan
- The Prodigal Son
- The Rich Man and Lazarus
- The Publican and Pharisee Praying

You should work hard at collecting good illustrations and stories and putting them into your sermons. It is good to write the stories out completely, so you know exactly how you will tell the story in the pulpit.

Even if you do not often repeat sermons, you can tell some stories repeatedly. If you develop a good story that illustrates a certain point, there is no reason not to use the story to illustrate the same point in a different sermon, especially to a different audience. If you do happen to repeat a good story, no one will get up and walk out. In fact, some children like to hear certain evangelists preach because they repeatedly tell the same wonderful stories. We are willing to hear songs sung repeatedly. Most people are willing to hear stories told again.

There is always the danger of a preacher simply trying to entertain with his stories. Entertainment is not a proper reason to use stories in sermons. However, stories are very helpful for keeping the attention of your congregation and for making the points of your sermon clear.

► The class should practice finding good illustrations for some familiar sermon texts. Have students find a story that illustrates the main point of the scripture text:

- Deuteronomy 6:7-9. The importance of teaching and discipling our children
- Matthew 6:1-18. The motivation for giving, praying, or fasting
- Romans 5:6-8. God's love for the sinner
- James 3:5-6. The power of the tongue

The longer the sermon, the more helpful it is to have good stories. Once you start to tell a story, those who are asleep will wake up; those who have been thinking about other things will refocus their attention on what you are saying, and those who have been listening will be happy for the change.

Here are a few suggestions for preparing and telling stories:

1. **Practice your stories.** This is especially important if you are not a good storyteller.
2. **Make the story as realistic as possible.** Do not talk about "Person 1" and "Person 2." Give real names and describe the story as realistically as possible, even if you have to change the name or circumstance to preserve confidentiality.
3. **Try to keep some element of surprise in the story.** Never say, "I am going to tell you a funny story." It is best not to tell anything about the story in advance.
4. **Use first-person stories.** These are stories of things that happened to you or about which you have personal knowledge. These stories are told with first-person pronouns like *I*, *me*, and *we*. These are the most effective stories you can tell.
5. **Don't give excessive details.** Details should make the story interesting but should not confuse the point. If you stop to explain insignificant details of a story, it will detract from the main point of the story. The point of the story is important, not the extra, unrelated details.

6. **Choose words your audience will understand.** Don't use words that are unfamiliar to your audience because of their environment or lack of education.
7. **Do not tell borrowed stories as if the experiences happened to you.** There is nothing wrong with borrowing stories from others. However, some people borrow a story that happened to someone else and tell it as if it happened to them. If your audience later finds out that this incident did not actually happen to you, it might shake their confidence in other things that you said.

Learn to be a good storyteller. A rule that every pastor should follow is this: **Never preach a sermon without telling a story.**

If you want to work on only one part of your preaching during the next year, work on presenting good illustrations. Your people will notice the difference immediately. If you learn to use stories effectively in your sermons, you will be changed from an average preacher to a good preacher or from a good preacher to a great preacher.

Write Out Your Sermon Completely

Writing out your entire sermon is a lot of work! If you are preaching every week, you may not be able to do this for every sermon. However, you will find that writing out an entire sermon is a good way to discipline yourself and to improve your sermons. There are many reasons why a person should write out sermons completely.

Writing helps concentration.

Our minds tend to stray when we study. Writing helps to focus our attention. When you are studying, it is helpful to force yourself to write a note about every verse or phrase or even every word you are studying. The concentration of looking for things to write will force you to think; thinking will produce insights that you have not seen before. The process of writing down thoughts produces more thoughts.

Writing helps you see truth you would not otherwise see.

If you force yourself to write something about every verse you are studying, you will look until you see something to write. It may be something you have never seen before. If you force yourself to write down 10 things about a particular verse, it is amazing what you will learn.

The Puritans were known for their ability to see a lot of truth in just a few verses of scripture. They got this information because they spent time meditating on biblical passages and writing down their thoughts. A Puritan pastor, Thomas Boston, wrote an entire book on one verse in Ecclesiastes; "Consider the work of God; who can make straight what he has made crooked?" (Ecclesiastes 7:13) Think how much time he must have spent thinking about this verse and writing down his thoughts!

Writing helps you organize your thoughts.

When we are studying, we want to capture every thought that comes into our minds by writing it down. Our recorded thoughts become the raw material we use to build our sermon. Later, we organize these recorded thoughts and put them into the sermon. The process of writing the sermon will force us to think about those facts long enough to put them in logical order. Writing out the entire sermon requires and enables us to organize our thoughts.

Writing preserves a permanent record of what God is teaching you.

Psalm 137:4-6 urges readers to remember God's blessings.

How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

God does not want us to forget the blessings that he has given us. None of us have a perfect memory; however, if we write things down, we will have a record of what God teaches us through our study of his Word.

When God sought a method to preserve truth from one generation to another, he chose to have it written in a book. A court writes down things as a written record that preserves the opinion of the court. Physicians write down the diagnosis they give to patients. Architects write down their plans for buildings and other structures. Is it unusual to expect preachers to write down what God gives them, so they will have access to these same truths in the future?

Writing gives you a useful tool to help other people.

There will always be hurting people who need your help. If you have been faithful to write down the lessons God has taught you, this material can be useful in at least three ways.

1. **You can refresh your own memory about what God has taught you.**
2. **You may want to share your sermon by making copies available to other people.** Frequently people ask the course author for a written copy of one of his sermons. He has shared written sermons with hundreds of people. He has received many positive reports from those who have received help from one of the sermons.
3. **Writing is useful for future sermons, articles, or books.** Nearly every book starts with miscellaneous notes. There are few people who simply sit down and write a book from start to finish. Collecting your notes from sermons can be the beginning of a larger work.

Keeping Records of Sermons

If you go to a doctor, he will do a diagnosis and treat you. After that, he will make notes about what he has diagnosed and treated. When you go back to that doctor, he has a record of your medical history. Lawyers do the same thing. They keep good records about their work.

God's work is even more important than those secular jobs. It is important that preachers learn to keep good records. Preachers should create a system for keeping records and filing their sermons. Here are some suggestions for filing and keeping records.

File Your Sermons Properly

There are several ways to file sermons. You can file according to text, according to topic, or according to date. It is also possible to do a combination of these methods.

Example of Sermon File Organization
Old Testament
Sermons from the Pentateuch
Sermons from the Historical Books
Sermons from the Wisdom Books
Sermons from Psalms
Sermons from Prophets
New Testament
Sermons from the Gospels
Sermons from Acts
Sermons from Paul
Sermons from the General Epistles
Topical Sermons
Missionary Sermons
Leadership Sermons
Biographical Sermons
Evangelistic Sermons

Keep Records of Your Preaching

This should include the date, topic or title, text, and other details. The course author keeps all of his old sermons in file folders or saved on a computer. He keeps his current sermons in a big notebook.

Conclusion

Communication is both an art and a science. It is both a gift from God and the result of hard work by man. The Bible says, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

God has given preachers many precious truths. We should apply ourselves in the best possible way to share these good things. Take very seriously your responsibility to prepare effective sermons.

Preaching follows the rule of the harvest. If you prepare and plant the seed well, the harvest will be great. If you fail to prepare and plant the seed, you cannot expect a good harvest.

Prepare the soil of your heart well. Plant the truths of God's Word in your sermons. You will reap the reward of successful preaching.

Lesson 4 Assignments

(1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.

(2) For this assignment, we will practice the steps for sermon preparation. Choose one of the following texts for practice.

- Psalm 8
- Isaiah 55:1-9
- John 3:1-21
- 1 Corinthians 13

(A) Write down ideas you have related to your passage or subject.

(B) Write a one sentence theme appropriate for a sermon on the text.

(C) Using the guidelines in this lesson, write a sermon outline for the text.

(D) Write an extended outline for the sermon.

(E) Find at least two appropriate illustrations for your sermon.

(3) As in Lesson 3, present this 8-10 minute sermon to the class. Each member of the class will complete an assessment form found at the back of this course guide.

Lesson 4 Test

- (1) List four of the things you could write down after deciding on the verse or subject of your sermon.
- (2) What is the *theme* of a sermon?
- (3) What is wrong with the following sermon outline? (Choose the correct answer.)
- The points are not all related to the theme.
 - The outline does not have parallel thoughts.
 - The points are not all related to the theme, nor are they parallel to each other.
 - There is nothing wrong with the outline.

Sermon Outline
Theme: Praise the Lord Outline: A. We praise God for who he is. B. We praise God for what he has done. C. We should love our neighbor.

- (4) List the three benefits of writing a clear outline for your sermon.
- (5) Is this true or false: In an extended outline, you expand each point into a complete sentence.
- (6) If a sermon is comparable to a house, what are good illustrations?
- (7) List three of the five advantages of using stories in a sermon.
- (8) List three of the five advantages of writing out a sermon completely.

Lesson 5

Preparing Expository Sermons

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Memorize a definition for expository preaching.
- (2) Learn and practice the steps of preparing an expository sermon.
- (3) Appreciate the power of expository preaching to change lives.

Introduction

In the previous two lessons, we have studied the preparation of various types of sermons. In this lesson, we will take an in-depth look at expository preaching. As we saw in Lesson 3, this will be the primary sermon form for most pastors.⁸

Definition of Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.⁹

Please memorize this definition. It includes several concepts that are important for expository preaching.

The Scripture Passage Governs the Sermon

Expository sermons are based on the scripture passage. The structure and primary content of the sermon comes from the passage itself. If the primary message of the sermon does not come from the scripture passage itself, the sermon is not expository; it is not truly based on the scripture passage, even though the message of the sermon may be true.

In expository preaching, we ask:

- (1) What does this passage of scripture say?

What did the writer say? When reading the text, what does the grammar of the passage say? In expository preaching, we are not looking for hidden messages; we are looking for the plain sense of the text.

⁸ The material in this lesson was contributed by Richard G. Hutchison.

⁹ This definition is adapted from Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Ada: Baker Books, 2001)

(2) What does this passage of scripture mean?

What did the author want his audience to understand as they read the passage? As we consider the historical context and the literary style, what does the passage mean?

(3) What is the primary message of this passage of scripture?

Because the scripture passage governs the sermon, the primary focus of an expository sermon will be determined by the primary theme of the scripture passage. The theme of the passage will connect all the points of the sermon. All the points in the sermon will be connected to each other through the main theme of the scripture.

The Preacher Communicates a Concept

Because the message of the scripture passage guides the expository sermon, we will ask several questions:

(1) How does the writer of this scripture passage express and explain his message?

This is where the preacher develops several points that express and explain the main theme of the scripture passage. Remember that all the points in the sermon will be connected to each other through the main theme of the passage. Compare the examples below.

Example 1
Text: Romans 12:1-2 Main Point: What does God want us to do? A. We must present our bodies to God. B. We must not be conformed to the world. C. We must be transformed in our thinking.

This outline is good, but there are some weaknesses we need to correct:

- The main point does not fully connect to the opening words of Romans 12:1; "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to..."
- Although each of these points is true, they are not connected with each other through the main message of the passage.

Example 2
Text: Romans 12:1-2 Main Point: What kind of worship does God desire? A. God desires worship that is motivated by his mercies. B. God desires worship that involves the whole person. C. God desires worship that transforms our way of thinking.

This outline is better.

- The outline is connected to the main theme of the passage.
- However, the three points could be better connected to each other.

Example 3
Text: Romans 12:1-2 Main Point: What kind of worship does God desire? A. God desires worship that is motivated by his mercies. B. God's mercies should motivate you to present your whole self to him as an act of worship. C. The presentation of your whole self to God should begin a daily process of inner transformation.

This outline is the best of the three choices. Each point of the outline is connected to the previous point.

This outline provides the main points for your expository (study) outline. Later in this lesson, we will take an additional step to make the points of the outline shorter and easier for the audience to remember. We call this the preaching outline.

(2) How can the preacher communicate clearly the author's message?

For effective expository preaching, the preacher must translate the author's words into the language of today's audience. He will express the original concepts of the scripture passage in ways that today's hearers will understand. To do this, the preacher will use:

- Word pictures
- Stories and illustrations
- Object lessons
- Explanations
- Outlines

The Concept is Applied to the Preacher

After we know what the text *says* and what the text *means*, we must ask, "What is the text telling me I should *do*?" This is called **application**. In other words, we ask, "What does God want me to do?"

Before any sermon is preached to the congregation, it must first speak to the heart and life of the preacher. The preacher is always the first audience for a sermon. Before we try to apply God's Word to the lives of our audience, we must first apply it to our own lives.

The Concept is Applied to the Hearers

A sermon that does not include an application to the hearers may be a very nice explanation of the scripture passage; however, it fails to move the listeners. True expository preaching must be applied to the hearer. We apply the message of the scripture to our hearers by:

- Asking questions that cause the listeners to connect the message to their lives
- Reviewing the key truths and principles that come from the text
- Considering the life situation of the hearers

Working with the Text

Choosing the Text

When choosing a text, the preacher should look for a passage that contains a complete thought that can be expressed in the sermon. Many preachers follow four steps for choosing a text:

1. **Choose the main verse or passage for the sermon.** Since the scripture passage will guide the entire sermon, it is important to select the right passage for the sermon.
2. **Look at the context of the chosen passage.** Consider the surrounding verses. Should you use more verses in order to have a complete thought? Should you limit the text to fewer verses in order to focus on a single thought?
3. **Look at study Bibles and other reference books to confirm the choice.** By looking at how the passage is used in a study Bible or commentary, you can confirm your selection. If other reference books divided the passage at a different point, ask, "Am I sure that my choice is the best selection for expressing the theme of this passage?"
4. **Make a final decision for the text.** After you have studied the surrounding context and considered other references books, you are ready to begin detailed study.

Absorbing the Text

From our definition of expository preaching, remember that the passage must speak to the preacher before it can speak to the hearer. After choosing the text from which you will preach, the next step is to begin identifying yourself with the message of the text. In order to do this, you must read it over and over again until you absorb not only the words themselves, but also the emotions which the writer must have been feeling when he wrote them.

► If you have a sponge, do this object lesson. Put the sponge in water until the sponge is saturated. Now squeeze the sponge. Notice how easy it is to get the water from the sponge. You do not have to work hard; the sponge is saturated with water. When you are saturated with the text, the words will pour from your heart like water from the sponge.

As you absorb the text, you gain an emotional connection with the words of the author.

- If the writer was angry, be angry at the sin that angered the author!
- If the writer was rejoicing, let your own heart feel joyful!
- If the writer was sad, join with him in his sorrow!
- If the writer was worried, try to feel his anxiety!
- If the writer was laughing, laugh!
- If the writer was weeping, begin to feel tears in your own eyes as you think about what he was experiencing!

A hot coal from a fire holds fire, even though no flames are visible. When the coal is placed next to dry leaves, paper, or wood, the fire will begin to flame. In the same way, as you fill your mind and heart with the words of the text, they will begin to burn inside you!

It is not enough to know the information in the text; you need to feel what the writer was feeling. The passion of the writer should become **your** passion. Why? Since we are handling God's Word, the passion of the text is the passion of **God**! You have been called to be God's messenger.

How can you absorb the text until you feel the passion of the writer? Try these steps:

(1) Read the text silently at least five times.

(2) Read the text aloud at least five times.

(3) Continue re-reading the text.

- Practice reading it with expression.
- Try to feel what the writer was feeling.
- Pause between readings to meditate upon what you are reading.

You will develop your own way of connecting with the text. Whatever your method for doing this, make sure that both your mind and your heart are engaged with the writer's

message. If you rush this important step, your message will be missing a crucial ingredient – **passion**. Effective passion in biblical preaching comes not only from prayer, but also from the preacher’s personal identification with God’s message as expressed in the text.

► Read the following scripture texts: Galatians 1:6-9, Matthew 17:1-9, Psalm 10:1-12, and Revelation 4. Read each text several times. Feel the passion of the writer. Imagine yourself in the writer’s situation. Do you feel the emotion of the text?

► Now, choose one of these texts and read it aloud to class. Read expressively to the class. Ask the class to evaluate your expression. Did you communicate the emotion of the text in your reading?

Analyzing the Text

Many teenagers have watched a skilled athlete and have thought, “I want to play like that.” They begin to play. They love the game. They have passion, but they soon become discouraged. Passion is not enough. A great athlete practices and practices when no one is watching. He runs miles to build endurance for the game. He does stretching, jumping, weight lifting, and other exercises to prepare himself for the game. These exercises are necessary for a good player. Exercises are not about passion; exercises are about sweat. Exercises are not exciting, but they are necessary if he will fulfill his passion to be a great athlete.

Analyzing the text is the hard work of preaching. Analysis is not about passion; analysis is about sweat! It requires spending hours in your office studying when other things would be more fun. It involves discipline, but it is necessary if you will communicate the passion of the text in a way that connects the truth of God’s Word to the needs of your listeners.

How do you analyze the text? Some steps to use include:¹⁰

(1) Ask simple questions about the text.

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- How?
- Why?

(2) Look for key words or phrases in the text.

(3) Look for comparisons and contrasts in the text.

¹⁰ For more on analyzing the text, see the Shepherds Global Classroom course, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*.

(4) Arrange the text into a natural outline.

A natural outline helps you to see how the scripture passage is structured. It allows the structure of the text to guide your sermon development.

Here is an example of an analysis (all four steps). At the end of this lesson, you will analyze a passage in the same way for the lesson assignment.

Example Analysis (Psalm 1)

(1) Ask simple questions about the text.

Who?

- Who are the "blessed" ones?
- Whose counsel do they avoid?
- Whose way is known by God?
- Who are the ones who will / will not stand in the judgment?
- Who are the ones who will perish?

What?

- What do the righteous delight in?
- What are the righteous like?
- What are the wicked like?

When?

- When do they meditate in God's Word?
- When do they bear fruit?

Where?

- Where do the ungodly go for counsel?
- Where are the righteous ones "planted"?

How?

- How does this psalm describe the way of the righteous?
- How does this psalm describe the way of the ungodly?

Why?

- Why are the righteous ones blessed?
- Why do the ungodly perish?

(2) Look for key words or phrases.

- Key phrase – "Blessed is the man..."
- Key words – "walks... stands... sits..."

(3) Look for comparisons and contrasts.

- "blessed" in contrast to "not so"
- "counsel of the wicked" in contrast to "the law of the Lord"
- a planted tree in contrast to blowing chaff

(4) Arrange the text into a natural outline.

Blessed is the man
 who
 walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor
 stands in the way of sinners,
 nor
 sits in the seat of scoffers;
but
 his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and
 on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
 that yields its fruit in its season,
 and
 its leaf does not wither.
 In all that he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so,
 but
 are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore
 the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor
 sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for
 the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
 but
 the way of the wicked will perish.

Preparing a Study Outline

What is the Study Outline?

The study outline is an outline of the points and ideas you are finding as you study. It is not your preaching outline. You will develop a preaching outline from your study outline in a later step. The study outline will help you organize your notes, insights, applications, and illustrations around the natural flow of thought that the biblical writer has given us.

The study outline is your working outline. You can make changes to your outline as you learn more about the text, but this outline will give you a basic structure to guide your preparation.

The outline is like a skeleton. Without a skeleton, our bodies would have no shape. No matter how beautiful your skin, eyes and hair, without a skeleton your beauty would be lost. No matter how big and strong your muscles may be, without the bone structure your body would become weak. Even the most powerful muscles must be attached to bones to function. The outline provides a structure for your sermon.

How to Prepare a Study Outline

(1) Use your natural outline of the text as a guide.

In the section on analyzing the text, you learned to find the natural outline of a scripture passage. Use this as a guide for your study outline.

(2) Look for the major points in the natural outline.

(3) Summarize the main thought of each point.

Example of Summarization of Main Thoughts
Text: Romans 1:16-17 I. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. II. He is not ashamed because the gospel is God's power to save. III. The gospel is God's power to save because it reveals the righteousness of God which can be received by faith.

(4) Summarize the sub-points from the natural outline.

Example of Summarization of Subpoints from the Natural Outline

Text: Romans 1:16-17

I. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

- A. What does it mean to be ashamed of something?
- B. How does Paul define the gospel of Christ?

II. He is not ashamed because the gospel is God's power to save.

- A. The gospel is God's power.
- B. God's power brings salvation.
- C. God works his salvation in "everyone who believes."
 - 1. God saves every believing Jew.
 - 2. God saves every believing "Greek."

(What does Paul mean by "the Greek"?)

III. The gospel is God's power to save because it reveals the righteousness of God which can be received by faith.

- A. The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel.

(What does Paul mean by "the righteousness of God?")
- B. The righteousness of God is revealed "from faith for faith."

(What does Paul mean by "from faith for faith?")

For the study outline, it is important to follow the natural points and sub-points of the passage. Remember that an expository sermon is guided by the text itself. The preacher does not impose a structure on the text; he looks for the natural structure of the text. The job of a biblical expositor is to listen to the text.

Developing the Sermon

Adding Content to Your Outline

After you have prepared your study outline, you are ready to begin adding content to this basic outline. While analyzing the text, there may have been questions about the text which you have not yet answered. In this step, you will answer these questions. You have studied what the text **says**; you will continue to study what it **means**.

The next step in your preparation is to seek greater clarity about what the writer of these verses intended to say to us. This is important because "when the Bible speaks, God

speaks.”¹¹ What the author intended to say is what God wants to say to us. As a preacher, you must identify yourself with God’s message and communicate it with clarity and passion.

In order to do this, you will be wise to use whatever study tools are available to you. If possible, use the following study tools:

- Bible dictionaries
- Concordance
- Bible maps
- Bible encyclopedias
- Word studies
- Commentaries

As you gather information about the text and its meaning, summarize the most important information in brief notes under the appropriate heading in your study outline.

Be careful not to include too many notes, or your sermon will become too long and difficult for your audience to follow. Instead, look for important pieces of information that could help you to explain more clearly the meaning of the text. Record your study notes in a way that you can communicate to an ordinary audience.

Look for information such as:

- Historical background – What was happening when this was written?
- Word meanings – Do important words need to be explained more clearly?
- Geography – Are any cities or locations mentioned in your text? What was the location of the people to whom it was first written? See what you can learn from a Bible atlas, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia.

If you still have questions about the text, read Bible commentaries to gain insights from other Bible scholars.

Transforming Your Study Outline into a Preaching Outline

Now that you have carefully studied the text, you will adapt your study outline into a preaching outline. A preaching outline is a revision of the points you prepared in your study outline. Your preaching outline should take the points of your study outline and express them in simpler, more creative ways.

The purpose of a study outline is:

- To show the flow of the author’s thoughts.
- To shape your message in the direction of the author’s thoughts.

¹¹ Albert Mohler in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2013)

- To provide a structure for your study notes and message.
- To help you focus on the message of the passage.
- To avoid adding points that do not come from the text (even though they may be good points for another sermon).

The purpose of a preaching outline is:

- To make it easier for your audience to understand and remember the message.
- To apply the message to the hearts and lives of your audience in practical ways.
- To exhort your audience to act on the message of the scripture text.
- To speak the truth of the passage with a prophetic voice into the lives of your hearers.

Study Outline	Preaching Outline
Provides a biblical structure for the message	Provides a clear and memorable presentation for the message
Connects the sermon to the text	Connects the text to the life of the listener
Focuses on correct information	Focuses on correct application
Makes sure the message is biblical	Makes sure the message is relevant
Finds the purpose of the passage	Communicates the purpose with a prophetic voice
Provides explanation of the text	Provides exhortation of the text

The study outline helped you interpret and explain the text. For that stage, detail was very important. In the study, you were dealing with the **science** of interpretation.

The preaching outline is less precise. It pays more attention to the **art** of communication. Be creative and imaginative with your preaching outline.

Avoid using the same type of outline in every sermon; you want to be creative so that the audience listens carefully each time you preach. However, do not allow creativity to lead you away from the message of the text. While preparing the preaching outline, you should return frequently to the study outline to ensure that you are remaining faithful to the text.

Suggestions for a Preaching Outline

(1) Let your preaching outline speak directly to the audience.

Since a sermon calls for a response, your outline should speak directly to the audience whenever possible. An outline that speaks directly to the audience will carry more impact. They will know that they must **do** something. This is not just information to know; this is something to **apply** in their lives.

Example of Speaking Directly to the Audience
Study outline: Christians must put on the whole armor of God. Preaching outline: Put on your armor!

(2) Use complete sentences.

In order to communicate clearly, use complete sentences whenever possible.

Example of Using Complete Sentences
Incomplete sentence: The Priority of Prayer Complete sentence: Make Prayer a Priority.

(3) Use action words.

Since a sermon calls the audience to a response, you should use active language when possible.

Example of Using Active Language
Passive language: There are blessings that come from obedience. Active language: Obedience brings blessings!

(4) Use simple language.

The goal of the preacher is to communicate to people, not to impress people with the preacher's vocabulary. When you use big words that people cannot understand, you fail to communicate a life-changing message. Impress people with the power of God's Word, not with the long words you have learned.

The apostle Paul was a brilliant scholar. He knew multiple languages; he could argue Greek philosophy, Hebrew theology, and Roman politics. If Paul had chosen, he could have used complicated words that no one understood; but when Paul preached, he communicated the simplicity of the gospel. He knew that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16).

In the Middle Ages, a bishop named Johannes was a famous orator. He could speak with passion and brilliance. Many people came to hear Johannes speak. The people were very impressed with their bishop. However, each time Johannes left the pulpit, an elderly lady would look at him and mumble, "Big Johannes; Little Jesus."

The bishop was bothered by her words. Finally, he requested a leave of absence from the pulpit. For nearly a year, he read the New Testament and meditated on the life of Jesus and the power of the gospel.

On Easter Sunday, Bishop Johannes returned to the pulpit. The cathedral was crowded with people. After one year, they expected a brilliant sermon. Johannes stepped into the pulpit to speak. He began, "Jesus Christ" – and stopped. He began to weep as he remembered what he had learned about Jesus during this year of prayer and study. After several attempts to preach his sermon, Johannes stepped down and walked to the back of the cathedral in embarrassment. As he walked past the elderly lady, he heard her say, "Little Johannes; Big Jesus."

The goal of a preacher must be, "Little Me; Big Jesus." Simple language that communicates the gospel with power exalts Jesus instead of the speaker.

Summary of the Process of Preparing an Expository Sermon

(1) Biblical Text

- A. Start with a key verse or passage.
- B. Identify the context.
- C. Absorb the text.
- D. Analyze the text.
- E. Arrange the biblical text into its natural order of thought (natural outline).

(2) Study Outline

- A. Summarize the key points of the natural outline.
- B. Organize the natural outline according to sections and subsections.
- C. Use the study outline as a guide for further study.
- D. Add content to the outline.

(3) Preaching Outline

- A. Re-state key points of the study outline with simple statements.
- B. Make it easy to follow and remember.
- C. Make it prophetic (speaking truth into the lives of the audience).
- D. Be creative.

Conclusion

► Go back to the beginning of this lesson and review the definition of expository preaching.

Expository preaching is hard work. It requires a commitment to dig into the text, to understand what God's Word says, and then to communicate the text to today's listeners. It is hard work, but it is rewarding. We preach because "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). When we preach Christ crucified, we see the power of the gospel because the foolishness of God is wiser than men (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Lesson 5 Assignments

There will be no test on this lesson. Instead, you will practice preparing and preaching an expository sermon.

(1) Choose a text on which you would like to preach. Do a detailed study of the scripture passage using the steps in this lesson.

(A) Absorb the text. Read it at least 10 times and feel the emotion of the author.

(B) Analyze the text using the five steps given in this lesson.

(C) Prepare a study outline of the passage.

(D) Add content to your outline.

(E) Prepare a preaching outline of the passage.

(2) Preach the sermon you prepare to the class. This sermon should be 12-15 minutes. Each member of the class will complete an assessment form found at the back of this course guide.

Lesson 6

Written Communication

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Recognize the importance of writing in scripture.
- (2) Learn lessons from Jeremiah about writing.
- (3) Understand the importance of writing for Christian leaders.
- (4) Learn practical suggestions for better writing.
- (5) Write something short, practical, and encouraging for the benefit of fellow believers.

Introduction

A few years ago, Samuel read a book by Dr. Danny McCain and decided to follow some of Dr. McCain's recommendations. He was surprised to see that his church was rapidly affected by the changes he made. He decided to come to Jos to visit Dr. McCain and get a copy of every book he had written. Later, Samuel made more trips to Jos to buy books to sell to his fellow pastors. Other leaders have also shared ideas from Dr. McCain's books with thousands of people under their supervision. This is an example of the fact that your writings can preach to people you have never met. This is the blessing of communication through writing.

Writing in the Bible

When God communicated with human beings, he often chose written communication. Writing is mentioned nearly 500 times in scripture. The first reference to writing is the record of God's judgment on the people of Amalek.

And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:13-14).

The last reference to writing is God's promise of a great future for his people.

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" (Revelation 21:5).

► Read these verses that show the scriptural importance of writing: Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah 36:1-2, and Acts 15:19-20.

Here are some of the things that God instructed his servants to write down:

- The law that was to govern Israel (Exodus 34:27, Deuteronomy 17:18, Deuteronomy 27:3)
- God's words on the doorposts and gates of homes (Deuteronomy 6:9, Deuteronomy 11:20)
- Songs (Deuteronomy 31:19)
- Words for God's people (Isaiah 8:1)
- A book of prophecies (Jeremiah 30:2, Jeremiah 36:2, 28)
- A description of the Temple (Ezekiel 43:11)
- Revelations from God (Habakkuk 2:2)
- Messages to churches (Revelation 1:11, 19; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; Revelation 3:1, 7, 14)

In addition, the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical writers to write the scriptures. The Holy Spirit superintended the writers of scripture, so their ideas were the Word of God, and they were protected from error (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).

God knows everything. He knows the best way to communicate and preserve truth. That is why God inspired men to write down the truths that God wanted to communicate with us. God's own example is a demonstration of the importance of writing. If writing is important to God, writing should be important to us as well.

Lessons from Jeremiah

Jeremiah 36 tells an interesting story from the last days before the fall of Jerusalem. Judah had deteriorated to the point that the nation would soon go into captivity. Jeremiah had been prophesying for several years about the coming judgment, but his messages were rejected. On one occasion, while he was in hiding, the Lord told Jeremiah to dictate to Baruch the messages that the Lord had given to him. Baruch wrote the words, then Jeremiah told him to go to the Temple and read these messages to the people.

While Baruch was reading, Micaiah heard him. He told the government leaders about what he had heard. The leaders invited Baruch to come and read what Jeremiah had written. As Baruch read to them, they became afraid and decided that the king needed to hear this message.

The scroll was taken to the king and read to him by Jehudi. It was a cool day with a fire for warmth. As Jehudi read the scroll, the king would cut off the portion that had just been read and throw it into the fire. Some officials begged the king not to destroy this scroll, but he showed no repentance because of the message.

After the king had destroyed this book, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah to get another scroll and write down everything that he had written before. No one likes to do the same job twice, but Jeremiah obeyed.

Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them (Jeremiah 36:32).

Jeremiah Demonstrates the Importance of Writing

Our writings can go places we cannot go.

At the time Jeremiah received God's instruction to write, he was in hiding. Jeremiah said to Baruch:

I am banned from going to the house of the LORD, so you are to go, and on a day of fasting in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their cities (Jeremiah 36:5-6).

Although Jeremiah could not go to the Temple, his communications could preach in written form.

The author of this course enjoys preaching. It is his favorite responsibility. However, he has become increasingly aware that his writings will have greater impact than his spoken sermons. Long after he is gone, his books will continue preaching. His books can go places that he will never go. One day he received a Spanish translation of one of his books. It was translated in Bolivia, a country he had not yet visited. That is the beauty of writing. Our writings can go places we will never go.

Our writings can speak in a way that we cannot speak.

Jeremiah had been a faithful prophet. He had preached and prophesied many times. However, he saw an opportunity to communicate in a new and different way. Note his words:

It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people (Jeremiah 36:7).

The reading did have the desired effect. Listen to the results of Jeremiah's words:

When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber, and all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah

the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the officials.

And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people.

Then all the officials sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi, to say to Baruch, "Take in your hand the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them.

And they said to him, "Sit down and read it." So Baruch read it to them. When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear. And they said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king" (Jeremiah 36:11-16).

Jeremiah was not unknown to Micaiah and the other officials. Most likely, all of them had heard Jeremiah speak. However, when they heard his writings, they responded in a different way than they responded to his spoken communication.

Written communication communicates in a different way than spoken communication. Some people will respond better to spoken communication. Other people will respond better to written communication. Written communication will reach a different group of people and impact them in a different way than spoken communication.

Our writings will speak after we are gone.

One of the most important ways we can preserve our ministry is to write. Jeremiah has been dead for about 2,500 years, but thousands of people across the world read his writing this morning. John Calvin is still preaching more than 450 years after his death. John Wesley is still preaching more than 200 years after his death.

Remember, "to whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). If God blesses you with the ability to write, you must preserve the lessons that God has given you. Long after you are gone, your ministry will continue. Even if your primary ministry is preaching, ask God if you can serve his kingdom through writing.

Jeremiah Demonstrates Perseverance in Times of Discouragement

Writing is hard work. You think, you write, you rewrite, and you finally get the message exactly like you want it. One of the most discouraging things that can happen to a writer is to lose something he has written. The electricity will go off before you have properly saved a document on your computer, or something will destroy the pages you have written. It is very discouraging trying to rewrite what you have lost.¹²

¹² Writers are advised to keep multiple copies of the things they write. God sovereignly used the destruction of Jeremiah's first document. However, we cannot always assume that the same thing will happen to us. Sometimes students lose their

This happened to Jeremiah. He had worked to record the messages that the Lord had given to him, and then the messages were lost. This must have been extremely discouraging. However, the Lord spoke to him and told him to write those things all over again.

Many of us would have been tempted to complain. Many of us would have asked God: "Why did you not protect what I have written?" However, Jeremiah did not bother himself with those questions. He simply went back to work.

Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. **And many similar words were added to them** (Jeremiah 36:32, emphasis added).

The end result was better than the former. Jeremiah was able to add more to the document than he had put in it the first time. Nothing was lost but something was added. God in his sovereignty allowed Jeremiah's work to be temporarily lost. However, in the process of rewriting, a better document came out of it. The point is that we should not allow ourselves to become discouraged. In all our communication, written or oral, we should trust God's ultimate purposes. He is in control, and we can trust him.

The Importance of Writing

There are many reasons why we should write. Here are a few reasons that writing is important for Christian leaders.

(1) What you write will improve your thinking more than what you read.

The more your brain is engaged, the more you will think original and creative thoughts. Reading stimulates thinking, but writing requires more concentration. Writing often produces more original thinking than reading does. It is very easy for your mind to wander while you are reading; it is much more difficult for your mind to wander when you are writing. The more you write, the more you will think; the more you think, the more original thoughts (new thoughts) you will have.

(2) What you write will be expressed more clearly than what you say.

When a person is speaking without looking at text, his communication is immediate and direct. There is little opportunity to correct any miscommunication. However, when a person has the opportunity to write in advance, he can state his meaning very clearly.

Time has a great way of helping our communications to mature and improve. When a person writes out a sermon, he will speak more precisely because he has had time to

research for projects because of armed robbers or fires. If you store things on a computer, you should regularly save these documents in two places. If your writing is on paper, you should photocopy all documents and store the copies in a safe place.

think through what he wants to say. The more you write, the more clearly and precisely you will be able to communicate.

(3) What you write will be understood more easily than what you say.

When a person hears a sermon or a speech, he has only one chance to understand. If someone whispers to him or distracts him, he will miss some of the communication. However, whenever we are reading, we can always go back to where we were reading. In addition, when we have the document in front of us, we have the opportunity to read slowly and think about what we read. This makes it possible to gain more from reading than if we heard a message.

(4) What you write will be remembered longer than what you say.

A sermon or speech will soon be forgotten by nearly everyone present. Perhaps you will remember one or two things that the preacher says on Sunday morning. However, if the preacher writes down his sermon and publishes it in a book, the sermon will still be preaching long after the preacher is dead.

Suggestions for Better Writing

(1) Write as much as possible.

The best way to ensure that you will become a successful writer is to get plenty of practice. Write everything you can possibly write. A good place to start is writing notes and observations while you are having your quiet time in the morning. This will give you a quiet and personal way to practice writing. You can write things that no one else will ever see.

In daily life, writing can serve as a means of getting relief from problems and pressures. Some pastors encourage people who are having problems to write. Writing can serve as an emotional release.

All of us need to express our feelings. If we keep our questions and problems bottled up inside, they will eventually cause us trouble. Sometimes we do not feel comfortable sharing our thoughts with others. Sometimes, it is helpful to write our problems in a journal. Write about the problem; write about possible alternatives; write about your feelings; write about your questions and blessings. People who try this recommendation often find great benefit.

After being encouraged to write, a lady produced literally dozens of pages of thoughts, meditations, poetry, and prayers about what God was teaching her. She was going through a deep crisis in her life. In addition to helping her articulate these issues, these writings became a useful tool for helping other people who were going through similar things.

Preachers should write out their sermons. If you are a Sunday school teacher, write your Sunday school lessons. Write out the things you are going to say when you dedicate a baby. Write out the eulogies when you conduct a funeral. Write out the presentations you are going to make to committees. Be a person who writes everything down.

Writing is hard work. It is easy to become discouraged. Writers get tired of writing and lose concentration. They find it difficult to think of anything to write. The way to overcome this discouragement is to keep writing. There are times when you will need to take a break from writing. At times, you need to do something else for a while. However, to be successful as a writer, keep writing as consistently as possible.

(2) Write as simply as possible.

The purpose of writing is to communicate, not to impress people with your vocabulary. People's attention is getting shorter due to television and videos. Therefore, good writers will focus on simple writing rather than complicated writing.

- Use common words rather than bigger academic words.
- Use short sentences rather than longer complicated sentences.
- Use many paragraphs rather than just one long paragraph.
- Write short books rather than longer books.

It is often helpful for writers to break up their documents with lots of headings and sub-headings. This is easy to do if you are writing from an outline. This kind of reading will help readers understand your writings.

Be personal in your writing. If you are describing something that you have seen or done, describe it as you would tell it to a family member, using "I," "me," and other first-person pronouns. Write as personally as you can.

(3) Edit your writing.

It is not enough to write down your thoughts. You must edit them to improve what you have written. It is best to wait a little while after you have written something, and then come back to edit it. When you have just created a document, your mind tends to think about what you have just written. You will read what you think you have written rather than what you have actually written. If you wait a day or two, you will tend to read the document more objectively. For example, if you write a sermon on Tuesday, edit the sermon on Thursday.

When you reread your writing, look for misspellings, improper capitalizations, grammatical mistakes, and similar things. You also want to see if your arguments are developed logically and carefully. You want to see if the illustrations that you used still seem appropriate after a few days. You want to make sure the conclusion is appropriate.

(4) Have other people edit your writing.

A pastor may not be able to get someone to read every sermon he writes. However, any document that will be published must be submitted to others for careful editing. Some people will read through the document to proofread it. They will catch typing and grammar errors.

It is even more important to have an editor consider whether your arguments flow naturally and whether your illustrations are appropriate. Editing is hard work, and it is painful. When a good editor goes through your document and tears it apart, it can make you feel bad. However, editing is essential to good writing.

(5) Be realistic about your writing.

Do not expect that the first book you write will be accepted by the first publisher who sees it. Every successful writer has to persevere. Even great writers have things that were never published. You should not become discouraged if your book is not received with a lot of enthusiasm. Keep at the job. If God has called you to write, someone will eventually recognize your talent and give you a chance.

Many people view writing as a means of making money. However, young writers should recognize that very few people make money from writing. You should write because of the love of writing and the opportunity for expanding your ministry. Making money should not be your primary motivation for writing.

Conclusion

Every pastor and church leader should write more. Pastors need to write their sermons. Teachers need to write Bible studies. Christian leaders need to write articles for magazines. Someone needs to write tracts for evangelism. Many of us need to be writing books.

What does it take to make a good writer? It takes some basic ability. It takes hard work. It takes a willingness to learn. You will never be a good writer unless you are willing to allow your work to be edited by someone who is going to make you feel bad. It takes time. Writing is hard work, but writing is very important for the kingdom of God.

► Do you have the ability to write? Consider giving time each week to writing. Share your writing with a few Christian friends. If what you write ministers to these friends, God may use your gift as a writer to minister to a wider audience.

Lesson 6 Assignments

(1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.

(2) Practice a simple one-page writing assignment. Choose a topic of practical Christian life from the list below and write to fellow believers. Your writing should encourage, motivate, or give a biblical perspective on your topic. Your writing should be based on scriptural truths and your reflections on scripture but should not be a sermon. You should include practical ideas or life examples. After you have carefully edited your writing, share it with several fellow believers. Choose one of the following topics:

- Facing discouragement
- The importance of daily prayer
- Keeping a spirit of praise
- Hearing God's voice in your life

Lesson 6 Test

(1) List three of the many things that God instructed his servants to write.

(2) List three ways in which Jeremiah demonstrates the importance of writing.

(3) List three of the four reasons writing is important for Christian leaders.

(4) List three of the five suggestions for better writing.

Lesson 7

Teaching

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Know the most important responsibilities of the teacher.
- (2) Understand the role of teaching in the Bible.
- (3) Appreciate the qualities of a good teacher.
- (4) Recognize the four different kinds of learners in every classroom.
- (5) Learn lessons about teaching from Jesus, the Master Teacher.
- (6) Avoid practices that will hinder the impact of teaching.

Introduction

Teaching is the active transfer of information and attitudes from one person to another. Teaching involves a teacher and a learner. Teaching can take place in a formal classroom setting; teaching can take place from the church pulpit on Sunday; teaching can take place in a one-on-one discussion.

What is a teacher? A teacher is a person who understands information and presents it to someone else. A good teacher is a person who can take a difficult truth and present it in a simple way. A teacher is primarily a communicator. He takes things others do not know and makes them simple enough for the student to understand.

The most important responsibilities of the teacher are to communicate truth to others and to teach others how to learn. The truth that God's teachers must communicate is God's message to our world. Our society needs people who know the conditions of our world, who understand God's message to our world, and who can communicate these things to the rest of us.

We have businessmen who are so good at communicating the virtues of their products that we rush out and buy them. Because of salesmen who communicate well, you can buy smartphones and Coca-Cola almost anywhere in the world. These things are temporary. Think how much more important the eternal Word of God is for our world. We need teachers who can communicate God's truth in such a way that the people of our world will understand and respond.

Teaching in the Bible

Teaching has always been important in the church. Jesus was called “Rabbi,” which means teacher. He instructed his disciples to go into the world and teach the things he had taught them. Note some observations about teaching in the New Testament.

(1) Teaching was one of the duties in the early church.

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul (Acts 13:1).

These teachers helped new believers understand what it meant to be a true follower of Jesus. Luke wrote to verify the truth of what Theophilus had been taught:

It seemed good to me... to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught (Luke 1:3-4).

(2) Teaching is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Some Christians have been given a special spiritual gift for effective teaching.

(3) Teaching is one of the primary responsibilities of pastors.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry... (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Pastors are to be teachers. In these verses, the two words are linked together in such a way that they refer to the same office. Teaching is so important that Paul listed it as one of the qualifications for being a pastor. Every pastor must have the ability to teach.

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money (1 Timothy 3:2-3).

If one will not teach, he is not qualified to be a pastor. Not every pastor has the spiritual gift of teaching, but every pastor must develop his teaching skills to the best of his ability.

Characteristics of a Good Teacher

What are the qualities of a good teacher? How can one become a better teacher? A good teacher will have the following characteristics:

Diligence

One of the misconceptions about the teaching profession is that it is an easy job. You do not have to dig in the dirt or get greasy working with engines.

There was a young man who earned a Ph.D. in the U.S. When he returned to the seminary where he had been teaching, he informed them that he was not going to work as much now that he had his Ph.D. He planned to enjoy the honors that went along with his Ph.D. This was the wrong attitude to have. God does not give us education so we will work less but so we can work more effectively.

Many people have a big misunderstanding about work. They think that hard work is a part of the curse God placed upon man. This is not true. When God created Adam and Eve, he gave them responsibilities. He told them,

Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28).

To subdue and rule over the earth implied activity, responsibility, and work. When Adam and Eve sinned, they suffered the curse that resulted from their rebellion. The curse was not work itself, but the hardship and frustration that would now accompany their work. Instead of the joyful labor they did before the fall, their work would now be painful toil (Genesis 3:17).

One of the Ten Commandments says, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (Exodus 20:9). This commandment was given to show that the Sabbath is sacred. However, a part of that commandment emphasizes what Christians have always believed, taught, and practiced – that work is honorable. Contrary to the opinion of some, work is not a curse.

If you want to be a successful teacher, you must work hard. You will not be an effective teacher without good preparation. Preparation means that you read and learn what others say about the topic you are teaching. It also means that you write out the things that you have learned and organize them in such a way that you can present them to your students. If you do not prepare well, you will not teach well. Successful teaching requires hard work.

Knowledge

A good teacher must know more than his students. One can have the best methods and the best personality, but if one does not know the subject area, he will not be an effective

teacher. A good teacher must have had some kind of education in the past. That education may be formal or informal. The education may have been received in a classroom under the direction of qualified teachers, or it may be a personal education that has been gained through reading and experiences of life. Every teacher must have a basic education.

Good teachers are not satisfied to remain static in their education. They continue learning and growing. One of the wonderful things about teaching is that you get the opportunity to learn things before you teach them to your students. Proverbs 25:2 says, "It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out." The first quality of a good teacher is that he is a good learner.

How do you ensure that you can continue learning?

- Read books
- Attend workshops and seminars
- Discuss serious topics with colleagues
- Write

The more we teach, the more we learn. The more we learn, the more we realize what we do not know and the more humble we should become. As we realize what we do not know, we should become eager to learn more. Keep on teaching, and you will keep on learning.

Innovation

Innovation involves creativity and flexibility. Both qualities are necessary for a successful teacher. A good educator must be innovative and flexible. A good teacher can handle unexpected interruptions and is able to teach in a creative way.

The most common type of teaching is giving lectures. Although the lecture method is a very important method, it should seldom be used alone. An English proverb says, "Variety is the spice of life." As you vary your teaching methods, you will reach more students.

One of the ways a good teacher will communicate well is to use some kind of unique approach. He does something unusual in the classroom. One great teacher will bring things to class, such as screwdrivers and computer parts, and use those to illustrate certain truths. The more unique a teacher can be, the more effectively he will communicate. A teacher should not hesitate to try new approaches in the classroom.

Humor

Few tools are more valuable in the hand of the teacher than humor. The Bible is not a funny book, but there are hints throughout scripture showing that the people of the Bible were normal people who enjoyed humor. Acts includes the story of seven sons of Sceva who were attempting to cast out demons "by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." When these men tried to cast out demons in the name of Jesus, the demon said, "Jesus I know,

and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" (Acts 19:13-15). The person who told Luke this story must have smiled when he related this incident.

Humor does many things for a teacher:

1. **Humor recaptures the attention of students.** The concentration of students is limited. After a few minutes, even the best student is tempted to think about something else. When humor is introduced, everyone is back. The attention of the class is regained.
2. **Humor relaxes the atmosphere of the classroom.** Teaching can become tedious. Facts, figures, doctrines, and concepts can create a very serious and even tense atmosphere. A funny story or humorous comment causes everyone to relax.
3. **Humor presents truth from a different perspective.** When a truth is presented from a different perspective, the truth may be understood and remembered much longer. A truth presented in a humorous way may give insight that will not be gained any other way.
4. **Humor softens correction.** A good teacher must maintain order in his or her classroom. Maintaining order requires one to correct those who are disruptive. To correct a student harshly can create anger, embarrassment, or fear in the classroom, even among those not being corrected. To correct using humor removes the sting and embarrassment.

Not all people are naturally humorous. Some people have to work hard at injecting a little humor. However, most people can learn to use at least some humor in their teaching.

Sensitivity

One of the most important rules in communication is to be sensitive to the people with whom you are communicating. The people to whom you are communicating are real people with real needs and real expectations. One of the marks of a good educator is that he is a good listener. Often we are so focused on our own area of interest that we tend to not notice the needs and interests of those about us.

The Corinthians thought they had knowledge, but they had little interest in their fellow believers. Paul warned them that knowledge alone puffs up, but love builds up (1 Corinthians 8:1). Love makes us aware of the needs and interests of our students. Love makes us a better listener.

The wise teacher is always aware of what is happening in his classroom. If students are getting tired, the teacher may need to stop teaching for a couple of minutes and allow the students to stand up, stretch, sing a song, or do something else to relax. If there is a distraction in the classroom or outside the classroom, the best thing the teacher can do is simply stop and wait until the distraction has been removed.

One of the big distractions in any classroom situation is students talking among themselves. Whenever two students are talking, they are not listening to what is going on in the classroom, and they are probably disturbing the people who are near them. A small conversation between two students can easily disturb 20-30% of your class. When that happens, just stop speaking. Silence for four or five seconds will get the attention of the students, and they will look back at you. Just patiently wait until all the students are looking back at you, and then continue with the lesson.

One teacher deals with talkative older students this way: He says, "When I was a little boy, my mother taught me that it was rude to talk when someone else was talking. Therefore, I am going to wait until all of you complete your conversations. When you finish, I will continue." And then he waits. If the talking continues, he sometimes adds, "In a few months, I am going to see my mother in the U.S. She may ask me, 'Have you been talking while other people are talking?' I don't want to have to admit that I am guilty!"

We must learn to be sensitive to our students. Are they tired? Hungry? Sick? Distracted? Bored? Confused by what we are teaching? To be effective as a teacher, we must be sensitive to anything that hinders the ability of our students to learn.

Patience

One of the most important characteristics of a good teacher is patience. Sometimes teachers become frustrated when students do not understand their teaching. Remember, ignorance is not a sin; it is simply the absence of knowledge. It is usually not the result of a deliberate decision to avoid learning. A good teacher recognizes that learning is a process. A good teacher recognizes that students learn in different ways and at different speeds. Therefore, good teachers will be patient with students.

Robert Thompson explains that there are at least four different kinds of learners in every classroom.¹³

1. People who learn by watching and listening. They are good at memorizing facts. They respond best to the traditional style of teaching.
2. People who like to learn by experimenting.
3. People who tend to be more emotional and involved in the feelings of people.
4. People who learn by applying or doing. These people like to test ideas in the real world and are not so interested in theory. Traditional forms of education are probably the least effective way to teach them.

¹³ Robert Thompson, *The Art and Practice of Teaching* (Jos, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2000), 23-25

We have each of these types of learners in our classroom, so we should develop presentations that will take into consideration each learning style. The content does not change, but we approach the material in different ways for each kind of learner.

- We give lectures for those who best learn by watching and listening.
- We create projects where students can do something with their hands for the experimenter.
- We have class discussions so the emotional learners can test ideas against how other people feel about them.
- We give practical assignments, so the theories we have discussed in class can be tested in real life.

Unfortunately, traditional education is designed primarily for the first kind of learner. It is difficult to create a school that takes into consideration all the learning differences in our students. However, every school should attempt to address this issue.

We must study the different ways students learn. Be patient with people who are not as disciplined as you. Be patient with people who do not work as hard as you. Be patient with people who do not do things like you want them to do them. Be patient with younger teachers who are just learning. Be patient with older teachers who are stuck in their ways.

Teacher of the Year

Cliff Schimmels, a professor at Wheaton College, was invited by a school official to evaluate two people. The first person was being considered for the "Teacher of the Year" award for his school district. In his classroom, the teacher was constantly on the move. When he was seated, he was constantly squirming and fidgeting. He would leap out of his seat and pace the floor. He looked out the window; he wrote on the board; he waved to students outside the classroom; he sometimes shouted when teaching. He was a ball of energy. Because of his incredible energy and creativity, he was being considered for "Teacher of the Year."

The principal then took Cliff to another classroom to observe a "troubled student." The child caused problems for every teacher in school. No one knew what to do with him. He would leap out of his seat and pace the floor. He looked out the window; he wrote on the board; he waved to other students outside the classroom; he sometimes shouted when answering the teacher. He was a ball of energy. Because of his incredible energy and creativity, he was considered a "troubled student." Remember: Today's "troubled student" may be tomorrow's "Teacher of the Year."

Balance

The Christian educator must balance preparation and spontaneity.

There is no substitute for preparation. You should prepare to the best of your ability. However, the best learning often comes from spontaneous questions and reactions. You should build in some time for spontaneous questions. You must learn when to depart from your prepared lesson plan and when to follow the plan.

The Christian educator must balance being an expert and being a learner.

You want to give your students confidence that you know what you are talking about. You do this by being prepared for classes and by being prepared for their questions. However, you want them to know that you are a learner along with them, and you are capable of growing and learning just like they are. There is no sin in saying, "I don't know." Our students should know that we are learning and growing with them.

The Christian educator must balance work and rest.

In Mark 6, Jesus sent his disciples into the field two by two to do practical ministry:

So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them (Mark 6:12-13).

Then, the apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught (Mark 6:30).

This had been a busy time. They had worked hard. They had expended a lot of physical and emotional energy. When the disciples came back, many of their converts followed them. Notice what happens next.

And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat (Mark 6:31).

Do you see what Jesus did immediately after this very successful mission? Some people probably would have said, "Let's take advantage of our success. Let's work hard, for the night is coming when no man can work." However, that is not what Jesus did. Jesus said, "Come away by yourselves... and rest a while." A good Christian educator knows when to work, and he knows when to rest. Learn to be balanced.

The Christian educator must balance theory and practice.

All practice should be based upon good theory; theory is important. However, theory that has no practical application is of little value; practice is important. The good teacher must lead his students to understand and appreciate the balance between theory and practice.

Jesus, the Master Teacher

Jesus was an outstanding teacher. A Christian teacher can learn much from studying the way that Jesus taught. Jesus demonstrates the characteristics described above. We will particularly focus on some of the teaching methods that Jesus used.

Jesus Gave Lectures

A lecture is a one-way presentation about a topic or theme. It is designed to convey the maximum amount of information in the shortest amount of time. The Sermon on the Mount is a good example of a lecture (Matthew 5-7). It teaches about the characteristics of the kingdom of heaven. The Olivet Discourse is another example of a lecture (Matthew 24-25).

The lecture method is probably the most common teaching device. It assumes that the teacher knows more than the student. The teacher is the giver of the material, and the student is the recipient of the material.

Jesus Used Questions

Jesus was asked many questions:

- When they saw a man who had been born blind, his disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2)
- Some people asked questions to trap Jesus. "And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?'" (Matthew 19:3)
- A lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (Matthew 22:36)

Many times, Jesus asked questions:

- When it was time to teach his disciples more about his messianic mission, Jesus began with a question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13)
- When the Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus with questions, he asked them a difficult question: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42)

At times, Jesus answered a question with a question.

- And Pharisees came up and tested him asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" (Mark 10:2-3)

- Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (Matthew 9:14-15)
- And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (Luke 10:25-26)

Here are some practical suggestions for using questions and answers.

- Build questions into your lectures.
- Plan times when you allow students to ask questions that are unrelated to the specific lecture. Some teachers begin each day allowing students to ask one question on any topic.
- Begin your class by asking one or two questions. Cover the material and then allow students to answer the question(s) at the end of the class period.
- Give questions to students as part of their homework assignments. One way to do this is to have students work through a study guide. A study guide is a list of questions over a portion of scripture that require the student to study the Bible and think about its meaning.
- Break the class up into small groups and have them discuss some questions.
- Close your class by asking your students to think about one of these questions until the next class period.
- Keep track of all new questions. Write them down and keep them in a file.
- Have a question contest. Have students evaluate which are the best questions.
- Avoid answering questions directly. Like Jesus, respond to a question by asking another question. Guide the students to discovering the answer.
- Have students write questions for tests. Select one test question from each student.
- Have students write out the most important questions they have about the lesson. In a subsequent class, have them use the Bible to find answers to the questions.

Jesus Used Discussion

A discussion is where more than two people are talking. In a good discussion, you have teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction. In a discussion, the teacher draws out responses and answers from the students.

Jesus used discussion to teach his disciples who he was.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ (Matthew 16:13-20).

Another time, Jesus started a discussion among the disciples to prepare them for an important lesson he wanted to teach.

► Read Matthew 16:5-12. Discuss these questions:

- What did Jesus say to start the discussion among his disciples?
- What did the disciples first think Jesus was trying to teach?
- What lesson did Jesus teach them in this conversation?

There are two ways that teachers can start discussions:

1. The entire classroom may participate in a discussion. Ideally, this will go beyond just a question and answer session with interaction between the teacher and the student. Hopefully, students will have a chance to address other students directly.
2. The teacher may break the class into small groups where students are forced to talk with one another.

Jesus Used Debate

A debate is where you have two opinions expressed. One person or group supports one position, and another person or group supports the other position. Jesus engaged in several debates between himself and others. There is no clear illustration of a debate that Jesus started between his disciples although there are some hints. At one time the disciples were discussing who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. The discussion about who Jesus was could also be considered a debate.

Debates can be a very effective teaching method. When a teacher comes to a topic that is controversial, he can present both sides and then give the students a chance to support one of the positions. Most of the time, 30 seconds is enough time to make their point. At the end of 30 seconds, the teacher gives 30 seconds to a person on the other side of the issue. The class can go back and forth until both sides of the issue are adequately presented.

When a teacher is covering the Song of Solomon, he can ask the students to consider, "What is the best way to interpret this book of the Bible? Is it an allegory¹⁴ about Christ's love for the church, or is it poetry about human love?" He could give a lecture that presents arguments on both sides, or he could have the students debate. "During the next class, you will debate the Song of Solomon. Half of you will argue that it is an allegory; half of you will argue that it is poetry about human love. You will prepare for both sides of the debate. When you arrive at class, you will be assigned to a team."

Teachers have seen that students learn much more about the Song of Solomon by preparing for this debate than they learn from listening to a lecture. Because they must be ready to debate the topic, they prepare for class much more carefully than they would if they were only going to listen to a lecture. After a debate, a teacher does not need to lecture much; the students have covered most of the important points.

Jesus Told Stories

Jesus was a master storyteller. He told many different stories.

- Jesus told a story about a farmer who planted seed in various types of soil to illustrate the ways people respond to the gospel (Matthew 13:1-23).
- Jesus told a story about a Samaritan man to illustrate what it means to love your neighbor (Luke 10:25-37).
- Jesus told a story about a runaway son to illustrate the joy in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:11-32).

Jesus Used Object Lessons

One day, Jesus' disciples began to argue about who would have the greatest position in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus could have preached a sermon about humility. Instead –

But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great" (Luke 9:47-48).

¹⁴ A story in which the details symbolize something else.

The people who saw this event would never forget Jesus sitting beside a little child saying, "This is the type of person you must be in order to be great in my kingdom."

Jesus Used Proverbs

A proverb is a short statement that teaches some piece of wisdom. Jesus sometimes borrowed statements from the Old Testament and used them as proverbs. Perhaps the most obvious example is the section of scripture we call the Beatitudes. These are based on the model of Old Testament proverbs.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (Matthew 5:3-6).

Jesus Used Drama

Drama is using physical actions to communicate a message. On one occasion, someone brought a deaf man to Jesus. Jesus used drama to communicate with this man.

And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly (Mark 7:33-35).

The Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman who was caught in adultery and asked what he was going to do. Jesus stooped and wrote on the ground with his finger. We don't know what he wrote, but the woman's accusers slipped away (John 8:1-11). Stooping and writing on the ground was a dramatic way of making a point.

Jesus Used Summaries

One of the marks of a good teacher is that he is able to summarize complicated truths in simple ways. Jesus was a master at summarizing truth. For example, the Beatitudes give a summary of the most important principles of God's kingdom in a very simple manner.

Many of Jesus' statements are summaries of bigger doctrines. When a man asked what he must do to receive eternal life, Jesus summarized the Law in two commands: Love God and love your neighbor (Luke 10:25-28).

The summary technique is a great method for teaching. There are two applications.

1. Good teachers summarize their teaching in a few statements. That is the most common way we use the summary technique.

2. Good teachers require their students to summarize their teaching. A student's summary reveals how well he or she understands a lesson.

Sometimes a teacher will ask his students to summarize a story or truth in 25 words or less. When they start speaking, he starts counting the words. When they realize that he is actually counting the words, they will often back up and be much more careful with their words. This is a great teaching technique that really forces the student to think and not just repeat a memorized answer.

Jesus Taught by Example

No matter how well you lecture, if you do not live according to your teaching, you are not an effective teacher. Jesus lived what he taught.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:21-22).

An old proverb says,

We teach **some** by what we **say**.
We teach **more** by what we **do**.
We teach **most** by what we **are**.

This is an important truth. The world has seen many hypocrites who have taught one thing and practiced another. A person who does not live what they teach is not truly effective as a teacher.

Our actions teach both positively and negatively. Look at the impact of negative teaching:

- Abraham told a half-truth, "Sarah is my sister." This was partially true.
- Abraham's son, Isaac, said, "Rebekah is my sister." This was a complete lie.
- Isaac's son, Jacob, told many lies.
- Jacob's sons sold Joseph into slavery and lied to their father about it.

Each generation learned from the previous generation. We teach most by what we are.

You cannot model without spending time with people. Learn to develop mentoring relationships. Senior teachers should help junior teachers. If the senior teachers do not volunteer, the junior teachers should seek them out. There is nearly always someone junior to you that you can help to mentor. A Christian educator must be a good model.

Jesus Communicated Vision

The most important thing that Jesus communicated was not information but vision. Jesus was able to take 12 ordinary people and give them a world-changing vision in only three years.

The disciples learned many things from Jesus, but the most important thing he taught was his vision for the world. Jesus' followers gained a vision for going into all of the world and making disciples of all people. The spread of the early church shows how successfully Jesus communicated this vision.

Perhaps the most important thing that a leader can communicate is his vision. He must communicate to his followers where they are going and what they should be doing.

Things to Avoid as a Teacher

There are some things that will distract from your teaching or hinder the impact of your teaching. Work to avoid these practices.

(1) Distracting Students with Your Speech Habits

Do not allow your poor speech habits to distract students from learning. Speakers often develop bad habits that are obvious to everyone but themselves. One preacher uses the word *fantastic* once in about every two sentences. Sometimes a lecturer will say "uh" in nearly every sentence. These habits distract students from learning. Ask your spouse or someone who will be honest with you to point out irritating habits that hinder your communication.

(2) Embarrassing Your Students

Do not embarrass students. If a student does not answer a question correctly, do not say, "That was completely wrong." Find something positive in the answer, if at all possible. You can say, "That was a good start, but I think someone needs to add more."

We rarely know why students are unprepared or are late to class. If we scold them and then later discover that they had a legitimate reason for their inability to perform, it will hurt our credibility as a teacher. Do not embarrass students.

(3) Refusing to Admit Your Ignorance

Do not be afraid to admit your ignorance. Most people hate to admit that they do not know something. There is no shame in ignorance. A professor was once giving a lecture. Someone asked the professor a question, and he replied, "I do not know." Later, his student asked, "Why did you say you did not know the answer to that question?" The professor replied, "Because I did not know the answer!"

The more you learn, the more you realize how much you do not know and the more willing you are to admit your ignorance. As a general rule, your students will respect you when you are honest enough to admit that you do not know something.

Conclusion

Teaching is an important aspect of Christian ministry and leadership. Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world and make disciples. How would they accomplish this mission?

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

As a teacher, you have a valuable role in accomplishing Jesus' Great Commission. You are helping to make disciples. What a privilege it is to teach!

Lesson 7 Assignments

- (1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.
- (2) Prepare a Bible lesson to teach to the other members of the class. Remember, this is a Bible lesson, not a sermon. Use a variety of teaching techniques in the lesson.

Lesson 7 Test

- (1) What is teaching?
- (2) What are the two most important responsibilities of the teacher?
- (3) List three of the seven characteristics of a good teacher.
- (4) Name four ways humor is helpful when teaching.
- (5) List three of the four pairs of things Christian educators must balance.
- (6) List three of Jesus' ten teaching methods mentioned in this lesson.
- (7) Why do good teachers require students to summarize their teaching?
- (8) List three practices you should avoid as a teacher.

Lesson 8

Human Relations

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Learn lessons from positive and negative examples of human relations in the Bible.
- (2) Recognize practical principles for human relations.
- (3) Recognize dangers to avoid in human relations.
- (4) Appreciate the importance of human relations for ministers and church leaders.

Introduction

Human relations or public relations is important in doing any kind of project. Many people ruin their reputations and seriously hinder ministries because of poor human relations. Even good people with good motives have failed in important ministry opportunities because of their poor human relations skills.

Human relations is the art of working with other people to accomplish a task.

Good human relations makes others feel good and gains their willing cooperation in projects.

Human relations is an important part of the job of a pastor or Christian leader. As you build good relationships in the community, you open doors for the gospel. As you build good relationships in the church and with other believers, you gain support for ministry projects. An important part of communications is the ability to communicate in a way that wins the willing cooperation of other people. This furthers the work of God.

Human Relations in the Bible

Proverbs shows the importance of positive human relations. "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold" (Proverbs 22:1).

What is a good name? It is a reputation for doing right. It is the way people perceive or see you. You may treat everyone fairly, but if someone perceives that you are being unfair, you will be judged as unfair. We sometimes say, "Perception is reality." What people believe about you is important; it affects their willingness to cooperate with you. This is human relations: working on perceptions. To have a good name is to be perceived as being fair and good.

Rehoboam: An Example of Bad Human Relations

The story of Rehoboam illustrates the importance of good human relations. After Solomon's death, Rehoboam was made king.

► Read this story in 1 Kings 12:1-20.

Rehoboam had everything he needed to begin his rule. He had the position as king. He apparently had the blessing of his father, Solomon. Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel pledged cooperation if Rehoboam would simply be a little gentler with the people. The whole future of his kingdom depended upon his human relations skills.

In a tragic decision, Rehoboam rejected the wise advice of the older men and listened to the advice of his inexperienced young friends. As a result of Rehoboam's decision, the nation was divided, and Israel would never again be one kingdom. Israel's entire history suffered the results of Rehoboam's foolish decision.

What were some of Rehoboam's human relations mistakes?

- He ignored the good advice of wise men.
- He ignored the feelings and emotions of other people.
- He ignored the impact of his actions on other people.

Christian leaders must realize one cannot successfully complete a project without the help of other people. One cannot work with other people without having good human relations. Rehoboam shows a negative example of human relations. There are also positive examples from the Bible that we will consider.

Paul: An Example of Good Human Relations

► Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. Make a list of principles related to human relations.

Paul knew that it is important to be sensitive to the feelings of others. Paul's letter to the Corinthian believers shows principles of good human relations.

Paul surrendered his personal rights.

A person who is good at human relations is willing to surrender his own personal rights. Paul says that he gave up his rights in order to serve the needs of the Corinthians.

On one occasion while fleeing from enemies, David said that he would love the taste of water from the well near his home in Bethlehem. He probably never imagined that anyone would act on his comment, but three of his best warriors slipped through the enemy lines to get that water. When the water was given to David, he poured it out on the ground (2 Samuel 23:14-17). He said that his desire was not important enough to risk the lives of others. That was a human relations act. Many kings have made others suffer or die for their desires, but David yielded up his right to be treated differently than ordinary people. It was because of this spirit that David was so highly respected by his people.

During an evangelistic crusade in Jos, Nigeria, there was an example of this kind of human relations. During the first service, it began to rain heavily. Most of the people were standing in the rain. The choir and all the so-called "important people" were on the platform. It was not time to preach; no one would have felt bad if the preacher and his helpers had walked off the platform and sought shelter from the rain. Instead, the evangelist and his entire team stayed on the platform and continued to worship the Lord in spite of the rain. This gave him a real advantage when he later preached to the congregation. By giving up his comfort, he earned the right to be heard.

Romans 14 provides an interesting study of human relations.

► Read Romans 14.

To understand this chapter, one has to understand what Paul means by the "strong" and the "weak." The strong people referred to in this chapter are those who have a strong conscience. Their spiritual maturity and understanding of God's Word have shown them that some issues are matters of personal preference, not biblical conviction. The weak people are those who have a weak conscience. They have not yet matured in their understanding of God's Word. It is easy for their consciences to be offended.

Many Jews had a weak conscience; they were afraid of breaking traditions. The Gentiles, on the other hand, did not have these traditions. They could do things which the Jews could not do; they could eat certain foods which the Jews could not. It is important to remember in this passage that "weak" and "strong" do not describe the level of one's commitment. These terms have only to do with the sensitivity of one's conscience.

When we read Romans 14, we see that Paul was very concerned about offending others. He urged Christian believers to be very careful about their actions. The chapter is an excellent description of the principles of good human relations. Good human relations requires:

- Putting others first.
- Focusing on perceptions.
- Giving up your own personal rights.
- Being sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Not allowing minor things to create problems.

Paul yielded his personal preferences.

Paul's young assistant Timothy had a Jewish mother, but had never been circumcised. Paul knew that circumcision is no longer necessary for God's people. Paul had written a strong letter about circumcision (Galatians) and had participated in the Jerusalem Council which said that circumcision was not necessary for Christians.

However, Paul encouraged Timothy to be circumcised. Why? To make Timothy more effective in ministry. Paul knew that Timothy would be visiting synagogues and

ministering to Jewish audiences. To avoid questions about an uncircumcised person going into a synagogue, it was better to have Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

On another occasion Paul agreed to participate in Jewish purification sacrifices (Acts 21:18-26). Did he believe it was necessary to do this to please God? No, but he was willing to do this to win Jewish brothers for the work of God. He wanted them on his side so they could work together to build God's kingdom. Paul was willing to yield his personal preferences in order to promote the work of God.

On the other hand, Paul refused to compromise on matters of principle. When Gentile converts in Galatia were pressured to return to the practice of circumcision, Paul was firm in his commitment to the principle of justification by faith alone (Galatians 1-2, 5). In the same way, he refused to press a Gentile pastor, Titus, to be circumcised (Galatians 2:1-5). If there were a matter of principle involved, Paul would not compromise.

Paul used compliments.

Notice the way Paul begins his letters. After the greetings, he normally compliments his readers.¹⁵ When he had to reprimand people in a church, he usually said something positive in advance so the people knew that he was not against them. This is good human relations. Be free with compliments. When dealing with other people, you should always strive to be positive. Be a person who builds others up, not a person who tears others down.

Paul identified with people.

Paul knew how to address people courteously and in a culturally sensitive manner. When he spoke before Felix, Paul said:

Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense (Acts 24:10).

When Paul spoke to Agrippa, he said:

I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently (Acts 26:2-3).

Paul was respectful of the position of these authorities and treated them with courtesy. Some Christians have forgotten the importance of courtesy. A person who was less courteous might have said to Felix, "I know that you are a judge over this nation, but I answer only to God. Your opinion doesn't matter!" If Paul had given this response, he

¹⁵ See Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4-7, Philippians 1:3-6, Colossians 1:3-4, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4, and 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4.

would have lost the opportunity to share the gospel with this government official. As a result of Paul's courtesy, he was able to speak to Felix about faith in Christ Jesus for a period of two years (Acts 24:24-27).

Paul studied the places where he would minister and found ways to identify with the people. When preaching in Athens, Paul quoted from one of the pagan writers popular among the Greeks (Acts 17:28). He was sensitive to his audience.

Sometimes, human relations problems are caused by good people who view things only from their own point of view. They fail to understand how their actions are perceived by others. Rather than achieving a good goal, it creates the opposite response. The value of good human relations requires us to identify with other people and to consider their point of view.

Practical Suggestions for Human Relations

Cultivating good human relations is one of the most important things about a project. Many times, the problems we face in our projects are because of poor human relations. Here are some guidelines for good human relations.

(1) Start at the top.

Start by speaking to the people at the top of an organization and work your way down. This is much easier than starting at the bottom and working your way up to the person who has to make the decision. Information goes down the chain of command much better than it goes up.

Africa is an authoritarian society. Great respect is given to the person in authority. People under authority can seldom do anything without the approval of the person at the top. People are even afraid of being innovative and suggesting ideas to this person. To avoid trouble, it is good to go directly to him. Once you have gained permission from the one in authority, you will have less trouble working with the subordinates. If you are able to secure the favor of the person at the top, you have gone a long way in solving problems. The rest of the people in the department will work hard to do your project.

The best thing you can do for human relations purposes is to not only secure **permission** of the person at the top but to secure their **participation**. Attempt to get this person to become a co-sponsor of your project.

Dr. Danny McCain (the author of this course) and a team of others have worked with 14 Nigerian states to create a Professional Certificate in Christian Education. They do not only ask for the approval of state ministries of education. They also ask them to become co-sponsors of the projects. Then, when advertising the program, it is not only an *International Institute of Christian Studies* program; it is a Plateau State government project. This is an enormous boost to their human relations efforts.

(2) Ride the wagon in the direction it is going.

The best way to get something done is to find a person who is already concerned about a certain problem, or interested in a certain project. You then find a way to help them solve the problem or develop the project. It is easier to sell a computer to someone who is already looking for a computer than to sell to someone who does not know he needs a computer. If you are working to help fulfill someone's objectives, your project becomes their project. The more a project belongs to someone else, the better the cooperation.

AIDS is one of the biggest problems facing Africa. A team has created a project that will help the Nigerian government fulfill its objective of fighting AIDS. However, the team is doing so using the Bible. They have found a way to help the government fight AIDS while sharing the message of the Bible at the same time.

(3) Take everyone with you.

There are always many people involved in a successful project. You must make all of the participants feel a part of the project. This is a very important principle. To get the maximum amount of support for any project, you must have the maximum number of people involved.

An organization from the U.S. came to Nigeria to hold an evangelistic outreach. They were good people and accomplished some good work. However, they did not achieve their full potential. Some parts of their human relations work were ineffective. For example:

- They had no local person on the platform except the translator. By having local Christian leaders on the platform, they would have received the blessing and respect of the local churches.
- They did not cooperate with the local churches. If they had cooperated, the local people would have participated.
- They came and did most of the work on their own. They funded the whole project. This made it look like their project, instead of the locals'. Because of this, they failed to get local people to commit to the ministry.

(4) Acknowledge other people.

It is important to acknowledge the expertise of others, even if it is barely above your own. Doing this demonstrates humility, and humility is good for human relations. As we have noted above, Paul freely complimented the Thessalonians and other readers of his letters. He always looked for something for which he could honestly compliment them.

We need to be sensitive to people at all levels. Find ways to compliment drivers on the way they drive. When you have your vehicle worked on, compliment the mechanic. Greet secretaries who are sitting in front of computers and find a way to compliment them on

their computer skills. The more you make people feel good about their skills, the better your relationship with them will be.

In a partnership, focus attention on the other person. Make the other person feel valuable. Help the person to realize that his contribution is an important part of the project. Make the other person feel responsible. If he does not feel responsible, he will not do much. When working with another person or organization, put the name of that person or organization in a prominent place. This helps get the job accomplished.

Remember that it is the work that is important, not the credit. If the work gets done, and someone else gets the credit, that is fine. The important thing is that the work gets done.

(5) Produce professionally written materials.

Although busy people do not like to read long reports, they like to see details. A detailed proposal with many sub-points makes someone look professional. The more professional you appear, the more others will support you and the greater the likelihood of your success.

When you produce a document that is filled with details, it shows that you know what you are doing. If you are trying to get someone to give you permission to do a project, you want to create a good impression. One of the ways you create a good impression is to produce quality documents. The more professional you can make your material, the more seriously people will take you.

The Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria lost some documents that Dr. Danny McCain had given them. They asked him to provide them with replacement copies. Dr. McCain put together a record of all their correspondence. He photocopied this in a very nice way and bound it all together with spiral binding. They were impressed with the professionalism of his presentation. This created more opportunities for him to work with them for the kingdom of God.

(6) Recognize that good relationships are as important as good ideas.

Projects require us to work with other people. Without good relationships, the best projects will collapse. Not only do you have to work on your proposals, you also have to work on the presentation of that proposal and the way that you interact with other people. Many salespeople get a contract not because they had the best product, but because they had the best personality. For the sake of the kingdom of God, work to build strong relationships with other people.

In a positive sense, we must know what other people are interested in. Be interested in their interests. In a negative sense, we must learn which words and phrases and actions have negative connotations. We must learn to hear what we say through the ears of the other person. This is why Paul asked Timothy to be circumcised; if Timothy was not circumcised, it would limit their ministry in the synagogues.

There is a man in Abuja who is excellent at human relations. He always says just the right thing to make the other person relax and feel good about his or her job.

On one occasion, he walked into the office of the Honorable Minister of Education, and he said to the secretary, "There are probably three reasons why I cannot see the Honorable Minister of Education today. But you know his schedule well. Can you give me some way that will allow me to see him?" It was not what he said that was important. Most important was the time he took to pay attention to the secretary and recognize her power to get him to the Minister of Education. He took time to recognize her value. Acknowledging another's value builds relationships.

(7) Be willing to learn.

A willingness to learn is a great way to gain respect. Human nature always admires a person who is willing to learn. To admit that you are a learner and not an expert is good human relations.

(8) Be sincere.

When Paul wrote to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, he began with compliments.

I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you (Philemon 1:4-7).

After his compliments, Paul made his request: "I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment" (Philemon 1:10). The compliments were sincere. Philemon truly had been a blessing to Paul and other saints. False compliments will fall flat. Be sincere in your relationships with other people.

Mistakes to Avoid

Most of the things in this lesson are written from a positive perspective. However, there are things we should try to avoid. These things will damage our human relations.

(1) Do not be self-centered.

This is a very basic Christian idea. If we are only interested in ourselves, this will become obvious to other people. It will ultimately hurt our project. There was a hard-working man who accomplished much good. However, he had a bad reputation for his relationships with others. It seemed like he would work with a person as long as that person could help him do his work. When the person was no longer useful, he discontinued his relationship with that person and found someone else who would help him.

We must work hard to avoid having a similar reputation. We must not give people reason to believe that we are self-centered in our relationships.

When speaking, avoid using “I” and “me” too much. There are times when you are telling stories that you can use the first-person pronoun effectively. However, remember that you are part of a team. “We” usually sounds better than “I.”

(2) Do not harm other ministries.

Sometimes we are so focused on our own ministry that we ignore the ministries of other people. One of the first laws of medicine is “do no harm.” That should be one of the first laws of ministry as well. We should avoid doing any harm.

(3) Do not ignore proper protocol.

Protocol is very important in many countries. It is better to be too careful than too careless. Americans do not emphasize protocol, and they have a difficult time following proper protocol in other countries. However, you must respect positions of status if you are going to build relationships.

(4) Do not rush.

One of the biggest mistakes we make in arranging projects is that we fail to take time to gain the cooperation of other people. It is good human relations to take your time – to make sure everyone is committed and lay a good foundation for what you are doing. If you push things through too quickly, it is likely you will offend people. Take your time when arranging projects.

(5) Do not compromise principle.

As is true with all things, there must be balance in human relations. To go too far with human relations can lead to compromise of principle. There is no sin in compromise when you are not compromising on principle. However, we must guard against compromising principles. As we saw above, Paul would not compromise biblical principles for the sake of human relations.

Conclusion

Good human relations is an important aspect of good communication. Without good human relations all our other communication will be hindered.

You might feel that this topic isn’t important for you. Perhaps you think, “I pastor a small church. I don’t need to communicate with government officials. Why do I need to study human relations?” However, every Christian leader has a need for human relations. Whether your church is large or small, you represent your church (and the kingdom of God) in your community. Look for opportunities to use your presence in the community to

represent the gospel. Look for opportunities to cooperate with other ministries and organizations to serve the kingdom of God.

► Do you seek opportunities to minister in your community? Are you available for public functions at which you can represent the church and the kingdom of God?

Lesson 8 Assignments

(1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.

(2) From a newspaper, magazine, or online news source, find two articles to share with your class.

- An article in which a leader demonstrated good human relations. Notice what he or she did well in relating to the public.
- An article in which a leader demonstrated poor human relations. What were the results of his or her failure? How could the leader have handled the situation more effectively? What lesson can you learn from this situation?

Lesson 8 Test

(1) What is *human relations*?

(2) List three of Rehoboam's human relations mistakes.

(3) List the five principles for good human relations found in Romans 14.

(4) For what reason was Paul willing to yield his personal preferences?

(5) List four of the eight practical suggestions for human relations given in this lesson.

(6) List five human relations mistakes to avoid.

Lesson 9

Cross-Cultural Communication

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Appreciate examples of cross-cultural communication in the Bible.
- (2) Learn practical lessons for cross-cultural communication.
- (3) Recognize the importance of love and respect in cross-cultural relationships.
- (4) Know practical ways to be a better listener.

Introduction

In your ministry, you will find that you need to communicate with people who do not share your cultural background. It may be someone from another country, or it may be someone from a nearby village, but there will be differences in understanding and communication.

The ability to bridge these differences will make you more effective as a servant of God's kingdom. In this short lesson, we will study some basic principles of cross-cultural communication.

► Discuss a time when you communicated with someone from a different culture. What difficulties did you face? Were you successful in communicating across the differences?

Cross-Cultural Communication in the Bible

Old Testament Examples of Cross-Cultural Communication

God's covenant with Abraham showed that the gospel would spread throughout the world. All the families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:1-3). This presumed a future when cross-cultural communication would be important.

Some examples of God's people communicating with other cultures include:

- Abraham and Joseph won the respect of the Egyptian Pharaoh.
- Solomon welcomed guests from around the ancient world. Many scholars have seen similarities between Proverbs 22:17-24:22 and an Egyptian collection of proverbs called *The Instruction of Amenemope*. This suggests that Solomon was familiar with Egyptian culture.

- Daniel became a respected adviser of Babylonian and Persian rulers. Daniel 1 shows that Daniel was a young man of strong conviction, but he was also respectful of the Babylonian officials (Daniel 1:8).
- A young Jewish girl, Esther, became the queen of Ahasuerus. Through her ability to combine boldness in approaching the king (“...if I perish, I perish,”) with respect for the Persian culture (inviting the king to dinner rather than presenting her request without preparation), she became God’s instrument to save her people (Esther 4:16, Esther 5:4, 8).

New Testament Examples of Cross-Cultural Communication

Jesus commanded his disciples to be cross-cultural communicators:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus said that the apostles would be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cross-cultural communication is essential for believers because without it we cannot fulfill the Great Commission.

Jesus provided a model of cross-cultural communication. He was willing and able to minister to Gentiles. While other Jewish rabbis avoided Gentile regions, Jesus willingly traveled in the Decapolis (Mark 7:31). While others avoided Samaria, Jesus willingly met the Samaritan woman (John 4).

The apostle Paul provides a great model of cross-cultural communication. When speaking to a Roman official, he claimed the rights of Roman citizenship (Acts 25:10-11). When preaching in Athens, he used the philosophical language for which these Greek thinkers were famous (Acts 17:16-34).

Paul worked hard to share the gospel with all people. Cross-cultural communication was important to Paul because the gospel was important to Paul.

I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

Practical Considerations for Cross-Cultural Communication

Listen before Speaking

James wrote that we should be quick to hear, but slow to speak (James 1:19). The apostle was writing about anger and the tongue, but his advice is good for cross-cultural communication as well. The more we listen, the more we will learn.

This sounds simple, but since we must listen a long time, successful cross-cultural communication will take a long time. There is no substitute for time. The best cross-cultural communicators are those who spend a long time in another culture.

Many times, we are slow to listen and quick to speak. We talk too much and observe too little. If we want to understand others, we must listen. This is true whether we are traveling in another country, evangelizing in a neighboring village, teaching another age group, or even visiting within our own families. Too often, we fail to listen before we speak.

Duane Elmer, a missionary and professor of cross-cultural studies said, "You can't serve someone you do not understand. If you try to serve people without understanding them, you are more likely to be perceived as a benevolent oppressor."¹⁶ In other words, even your efforts to serve will be hurtful and misunderstood. In trying to help, you will do harm. Why? Because you failed to take time to understand the person you are trying to help!

When John Seamands was a missionary-evangelist in India, he learned the importance of listening. If he visited a village and began to preach, people would listen half-heartedly and wonder, "Who is this stranger? Why is he speaking to us?"

However, if Reverend Seamands spent a day visiting the village leaders, visiting the local school, and asking questions, he received a much different reception. Now he was not a stranger; he was a guest. Now he knew their concerns and questions.¹⁷

Use Humor Cautiously

Even though humor is valuable to speakers, it must be used cautiously. Using humor in a cross-cultural context is difficult because humor is culture specific. What is funny in China is not funny in Florida. What is funny in Indiana is serious in India. When planning to use a humorous story, ask someone if the story translates to the new culture. Many politicians have offended an audience with humor that did not translate.

Tell Stories

Most stories transcend cultural barriers. Stories that describe the actions and emotions of people do well cross culturally. However, if the story contains too many cultural components, it will not translate well. Again, it is helpful to talk with someone from the target culture. Ask, "What does this story mean when you hear it?"

A professor teaches a college course on Music History. In that course, he often uses an example of Beethoven. Although Beethoven was a great composer, he did not relate well

¹⁶ Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Books, 2009), Kindle location 148

¹⁷ John T. Seamands, *Tell It Well: Communicating the Gospel Across Cultures* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1981), 97

with people. He was an angry person who offended many people. His friends called him “the Dragon” because he was so difficult. To a westerner, a dragon is a “fire-breathing monster.”

Then one year he taught about Beethoven in China. When he called Beethoven “the Dragon,” his students were confused. In China, the dragon is a symbol of good fortune. They wondered, “Why was this angry person given such a good name?” The professor had to change the story, so Asian students could better understand his message.

Be Sensitive to the Culture

Good communicators use many illustrations and figures of speech in their communication. However, the illustrations must be culturally appropriate. It is useless attempting to use an illustration about computers with a group of people who have never seen a computer.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton was good at cross cultural communication. He once told the story of the Good Samaritan to a group of Christians and Muslims. He said, “A man fell among armed robbers. The priest came along. He was a religious leader. Next a man from a famous tribe came along. Finally a man from an enemy tribe saw the injured victim.” President Clinton was explaining the story in a culturally relevant way.

Body language is important. In America, you can wave with an open hand to show friendship; in Nigeria, that gesture is seen as a curse. In America, you may gesture with a finger to call a person closer; in China, that gesture is used only for a dog.

The distance between people varies from culture to culture. Some prefer to be close; others prefer to maintain a distance. Even volume is important. Americans tend to talk and laugh more loudly than the people of some cultures. In some cultures, people talk more quietly, especially in public.

It is easy to say, “Those things don’t matter; it is just cultural preference.” However, we should avoid anything that will make it harder to communicate the gospel. This is why it is important to learn the cultural habits of people to whom we want to minister.

A Lesson from the Monkey

A monkey saw a fish swimming in the river. The monkey thought, “That poor fish needs my help! I am comfortable and safe on dry land, but the fish is stuck in the water! I am a kind monkey; I will help the fish.”

The monkey climbed a tree that reached across the river. He went out onto a branch, even though it was dangerous to himself. He reached far down and snatched the fish from the water. The monkey climbed down the tree and carefully laid the fish on dry ground. For a few minutes, the fish flopped excitedly, but soon settled down quietly. The monkey went away happy; he thought that he had helped another creature.

The monkey wanted to help, but instead he killed the fish. Why? Because he did not understand the fish's situation and needs. He did what he thought was good. Good intentions are not enough; we must listen to those we serve.¹⁸

Be Loving and Respectful of Others

Perhaps the most important advice that you can learn for cross-cultural communication was given 2,000 years ago: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). To apply that principle in a practical way, Jesus said, "...whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Too often we make the mistake of assuming that our culture is better than the culture of other people. We should learn that our culture isn't better; it is just different. Learning to respect others will greatly improve our ability to communicate.

At the age of 60, Jason was asked to pastor a church in Taiwan. He had never been outside the U.S. For 40 years, he had pastored small churches in rural American communities; Kaohsiung, Taiwan was a major city. Jason did not speak a second language; the church was a Mandarin-speaking church. It seemed likely that Jason would fail in cross-cultural communication.

Jason had only one positive as a cross-cultural communicator; he loved people! He spent two years in Kaohsiung. He did not learn Mandarin, but he spent hours with translators to make sure that his message communicated across the cultural divide. People came to this church not because he was a powerful speaker, but because he met them on the street, smiled, and listened while they talked.

Two years later, a Mandarin-speaking missionary visited Kaohsiung. As he walked through the community, a shopkeeper waved at him. In Chinese, he asked, "Do you know Pastor Jason?" "Yes. Why do you ask?" "I loved Pastor Jason." "Are you a Christian?" "No, I am a Buddhist. But if I become a Christian, I will go to Pastor Jason's church." "Why?" "He loved me! Every day he came and visited my shop. We talked many hours about many things." The missionary was amazed. It was not possible for Jason to talk many hours to a man who knew no English. But he showed love to a Buddhist shopkeeper.

This story does not mean that learning another language is unimportant, but it reminds us that love is the basis of all effective ministry. If we obey Jesus' command to "Love your neighbor," God can use even very limited abilities for his glory.

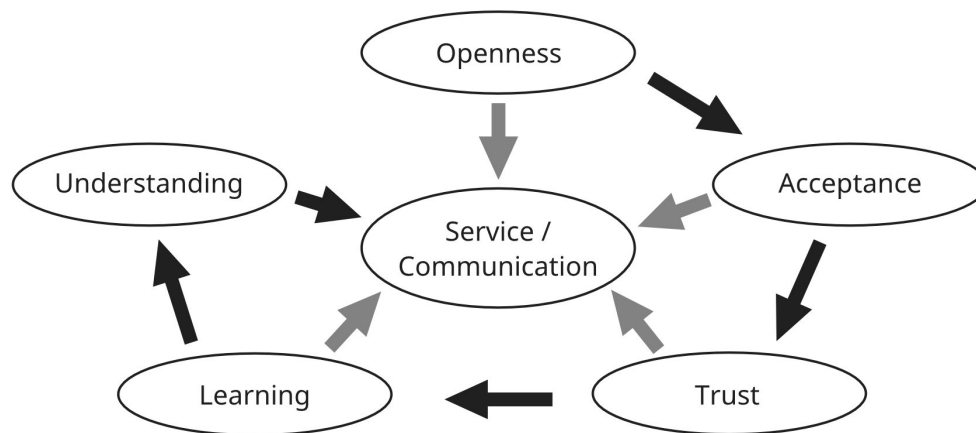
¹⁸ Taken from Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Books, 2009), Kindle edition location 214.

A Model for Cross-Cultural Communication and Service

Duane Elmer wrote that service to others requires understanding, learning, trust, acceptance, and openness. Dr. Elmer used this model to teach about cross-cultural service. It is equally important for cross-cultural communication.¹⁹

Effective communication requires:

- **Understanding.** Understanding cannot happen without *learning*.
- **Learning.** You cannot learn from someone until there is *trust*.
- **Trust.** To build trust, others must know that you value them as people. There must be *acceptance*.
- **Acceptance.** In order to communicate acceptance, you must show *openness*.
- **Openness.** Openness is the willingness to welcome people into your presence and make them feel safe.



Becoming a Better Listener

► Discuss a time when you communicated with a good listener. What qualities made it easy to talk with them? Discuss a time when you tried to communicate with someone who was not a good listener. What qualities made it difficult to talk with them? Are you a good listener?

Since listening is so important for effective communication, we should be as serious about improving our listening skills as we are about improving our speaking and writing. The

¹⁹ This section is adapted from Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Books, 2009), Kindle location 303-318.

wisest man who ever lived warned that it is folly and shame to answer before listening (Proverbs 18:13).

John Seamands told the story of a Christian missionary in Sri Lanka who was visited by a Buddhist priest. The Buddhist priest came to borrow books on Christianity. The Christian missionary said, "Are you interested in Christianity?" The Buddhist priest responded, "No, I am not, but I am training young monks who will go as Buddhist missionaries to the West. I think they should learn about the religion of the natives before they get there."²⁰

This Buddhist priest knew that he must help his students understand the religion of the people he was going to "evangelize." How much more important it is for Christians to understand the teaching of those to whom we take the true gospel!

In this section, we will learn some tips for better listening. This applies to cross-cultural communication as well as to any other type of communication.

There is a difference between "hearing" and "listening." For instance, you could hear someone speaking a different language without understanding any of the words. You would hear, but not understand. The Lausanne Willowbank report by Christian leaders from around the world called for evangelists, missionaries, pastors, and Christian leaders to "listen sensitively in order to understand."²¹

(1) Remove distractions.

We live in a world filled with distractions. Television, radio, internet, cell phones, text messages, and other devices divide our attention. If we truly want to listen to someone, we must turn off other distractions and give them our attention.

There was a man who frequently interrupted his conversation with someone else to answer his cell phone. Each time, he told the person, "Talking with you is much more important to me than answering the phone but excuse me while I take one call." In one hour, he answered seven phone calls. His voice said, "You are more important"; but his actions said, "My cell phone is more important!"

True listening requires that we focus our attention on the other person. Many things prevent us from truly listening:

- Thinking about other things ("What is next on my to-do list?")
- Trying to impress the other person ("I hope I can convince them I am right.")
- Planning what we will say when they quit talking

True listening means putting everything aside and focusing on the person who is talking.

²⁰ John T. Seamands, *Tell It Well: Communicating the Gospel Across Cultures* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1981), 17

²¹ Willowbank Report. "Gospel and Culture" (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978), 15

There was a child who would try to talk to her father while he was reading. When she told a story, he would grunt at the appropriate times. He thought he was listening, but he was not. Once his daughter told him a wild story while he continued to read. He continued to grunt, "Yes, that's nice," and never realized that his daughter's story was completely from her imagination.

(2) Show that you are listening.

An important aspect in communication is body language. It isn't enough to listen; the other person should feel like you are listening.

Sit where they are comfortable and where you can look them in the eye. Often, it helps to leave your desk and sit in a more equal position when you are talking to a church member, a person under your authority, or a person you are counseling. People will often be hesitant about being honest with a person behind a desk. To be a better communicator, do what you can to encourage others to relax and communicate easily.

(3) Take notes.

Depending on the situation, taking notes may communicate that you are a good listener. In a formal setting, such as a classroom or board meeting, taking notes will give you a good record of what you heard. In private conversations or counseling sessions, you may need to ask permission from the other person. You might simply say, "I would like to take a few notes to help me concentrate better."

Conclusion

If you were a salesman, you would want to understand your customers very well. You would want to make sure that you did not hinder your sales by failing to communicate clearly.

As a minister or Christian leader, you are not selling the gospel, but you are sharing the good news of salvation. Communication is even more important to a minister than it is to an ordinary businessman. Like Paul, you want to do everything you can do to win others to Christ. Taking the time to understand your audience will repay you with more effective ministry.

Lesson 9 Assignments

(1) At the beginning of the next lesson, you will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.

(2) Find a place where you can visit with someone from another culture. It may be a restaurant, a church, or some other community organization. On your first visit, do not try to evangelize. Instead, go to listen and learn. Ask questions, be friendly, and show love. After your visit, share your experience with your class. What did you learn from spending time with people of another culture?

Lesson 9 Test

- (1) Why is cross-cultural communication essential for believers?
- (2) List five practical considerations for cross-cultural communication learned in this lesson.
- (3) Why is it difficult to use humor in cross-cultural communication?
- (4) Which instructions of Jesus give us the most important advice for cross-cultural communication?
- (5) What five things are required for effective cross-cultural service and communication?
- (6) List three practical steps for becoming a better listener.

Lesson 10

Spirit-Anointed Preaching

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Appreciate the importance of the Spirit's anointing in preaching.
- (2) Know the importance of personal preparation for preaching.
- (3) Understand the Holy Spirit's role in preparing the preacher and the listener.

Introduction

In this course, we have studied the art of communication.²² We have learned how to prepare sermons, techniques for effective teaching and human relations, and skills for cross-cultural communication and better listening. All of these techniques are important for the Christian worker. As Christian ministers, teachers, or leaders, we should do everything in our power to communicate effectively.

However, after we have done all we can do, we rely on the Holy Spirit for spiritual anointing. In this final lesson, we will study the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching. We will focus on preaching, but these principles apply to teaching and other types of Christian communication as well.

The Preacher Must Prepare Himself

As a minister, you have many different responsibilities, but none are more important than your call to preach. Through preaching, God speaks to the people he has placed in your care. Because the ministry of preaching is so important, Satan will do all he can do to distract you from effective preparation. If you want to be effective in fulfilling your call to preach, you must take time for adequate preparation. Preparation of the preacher is even more important than preparation of the sermon.

What is Power in Preaching?

"God giving power to the preacher so that the preacher becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works."

- Adapted from
Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Preacher Must Prepare Himself through Private Prayer

For effective preaching and teaching, we must understand that before we **speak in public to people**, we must **talk in private with God**. Power in preaching comes through the anointing of God's Spirit. Our preparation for preaching must include time with God.

²² Much of the material in this lesson was contributed by Richard G. Hutchison.

Jesus is the great example of this truth. The gospels report that Jesus repeatedly spent nights in prayer. Before an important decision, Jesus spent the night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13). If the sinless Son of God, who lived in communion with his Father, relied on prayer, how much more we need prayer to be effective in ministry!

Through prayer, we take up the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:13). Through prayer, we are equipped for effective ministry. Our preparation for ministry must include earnest prayer.

The Preacher Must Prepare Himself through Personal Integrity

► Read 1 Timothy 6. What does this chapter teach about the character of the pastor?

God doesn't anoint programs or plans; he anoints people. Throughout scripture, we see that God's anointing falls on those whose hearts are prepared for service. Haggai spoke to people who were trying to do God's work but who were not living in obedience to God's law. God said, "What they offer there is unclean" (Haggai 2:14). Spirit-anointed preaching comes through preachers who refuse to compromise their integrity.

The ministry of many preachers has ended in scandal through a loss of personal integrity. Financial and sexual scandals have ended the ministry of well-known pastors and evangelists. Other ministers and leaders have avoided public scandal, but they have been ineffective in ministry because of hidden sin.

Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor at Ephesus. He told Timothy that he must maintain personal integrity as a minister. Paul's challenge to Timothy shows the type of person we must be in order to be effective in ministry (1 Timothy 6:3-11, 2 Timothy 2:22).

Paul told Timothy that he must **flee**:

- False teaching
- Conceit
- Controversy and quarrels
- The love of money
- Youthful passions

We must flee sins and distractions that hinder ministry. The church is brought to shame by preachers who are quarrelsome, immoral, unfaithful to truth, motivated by personal pride, or in love with money.

Paul told Timothy that he must **follow**:

- Righteousness
- Godliness
- Faith
- Love
- Steadfastness

- Gentleness
- Peace

We must follow the inner qualities that equip us for ministry. Note that the qualities Paul listed are not primarily outward; they are qualities of the heart. One of the challenges to the personal integrity of the minister is that we tend to focus on outward appearance instead of inner qualities. "For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). If we desire the Spirit's anointing, we must develop a heart that God can bless.

Paul told Timothy that he must **fight** for the faith (1 Timothy 6:12).

Paul reminded the Corinthians of the importance of the gospel. It is the gospel that brings us to salvation.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

Jude called preachers to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). The minister must never allow other issues to replace the centrality of the gospel in his preaching. Whether political issues, social issues, or doctrinal controversy, Satan delights to sidetrack ministers from a focus on the gospel message. As a minister, you must fight for the faith. The gospel must be at the center of your preaching.

The Holy Spirit Must Prepare the Preacher

As preachers, we must do our best to prepare for ministry. However, ultimately, we rely on the anointing of the Holy Spirit for power in preaching.

The Holy Spirit Gives Illumination to the Preacher's Mind

► Read the following verses: Psalm 119:18, 33, Ephesians 1:16-18, 1 Corinthians 2:9-16. What do they teach us about our understanding of scripture?

Illumination is the Holy Spirit's opening of our understanding. This is more than the results of our study of the text; it is a divine work. The illumination of the Holy Spirit does not replace the need for careful study, but it goes beyond what we can find through study alone. Every preacher should pray for this illumination!

The Holy Spirit Gives Power to the Preacher's Message

Just as Jesus modeled the importance of prayer in preparation for preaching, he modeled the importance of the Holy Spirit in ministry. At his first sermon, Jesus said,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor (Luke 4:18).

Jesus demonstrated that the key to effectiveness in ministry was the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus sent his disciples to preach the gospel around the world. However, before they were ready to preach, they had to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would not send his witnesses into the world until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

It is through the Spirit's illumination alone that we interpret scripture properly. Then, it is through the power of the Spirit alone that our preaching or teaching reaches the hearts of our listeners. It is through the Spirit that the Word of God pierces to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Jesus gave his disciples a wonderful promise. Preparing them to testify to hostile audiences, Jesus promised, "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:20). This does not mean that study and preparation is unimportant. Jesus was not telling us to avoid study, but he was assuring us that we speak in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul testified to this power when he said, "And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4). Paul studied diligently. Paul was a brilliant scholar, but he knew that ultimate power in preaching comes from the Spirit, not from human effort.

To be effective teachers and preachers of God's Word, we should study to understand the text. We should pray to be anointed with God's Spirit. We can then trust God to speak through us to bring his Word to his people. This will give true power in preaching.

The Holy Spirit Must Prepare the Listener

Not only does God prepare the preacher, he prepares the audience to receive the truth. Although the preacher must prepare himself for ministry, we can rejoice that the Holy Spirit prepares the listener for ministry. When we preach or teach, we are not on our own.

Paul reminded the Thessalonians that the impact of his preaching was based not on his own speaking ability but on the power of the Holy Spirit. "Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). The Holy Spirit took the apostle's words and applied them to the hearts of the Thessalonians with power and conviction.

Until the Spirit empowers preaching, listeners can agree mentally while their hearts remain untouched. It is the Spirit that convicts listeners of their need and draws a deep response.

This truth should be a great encouragement to each of us who preach. We do not rely on our own ability; we preach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In July 1741, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon titled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at a church in Enfield, Connecticut. This was during the Great Awakening, one of the most intense outpourings of God's Spirit in American history. God's Spirit was working throughout the colonies.

Edwards had preached the same sermon to his own congregation with little effect, but he felt God leading him to preach the sermon at Enfield. Edwards was not an impressive preacher. He read his sermons in an even voice. He did not speak loudly or use any dramatic demonstration. Nothing in Edwards' style of preaching would inspire a great response.

However, on that day, God's Spirit moved among the congregation. An eyewitness wrote, "Before the sermon was done, a great moaning and crying went out through the whole house.... People cried out, 'What shall I do to be saved?' 'Oh, I am going to hell!' 'Oh, what shall I do for Christ?' and so forth. The minister was forced to stop preaching as the astonishing power of God was seen."

Edwards had prepared in study; he had prepared in prayer; he had maintained personal integrity. All this was important, but the ultimate power came from the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: The Priority of Anointing

If the anointing of the Holy Spirit is so important, why do so many preachers settle for anything less? Perhaps one reason is that we are unwilling to earnestly pray for anointing.

We have seen that the Spirit's anointing will cost prayer. E.M. Bounds wrote, "Prayer, much prayer, is the price of [anointing] in preaching."²³

The Spirit's anointing
"comes to the preacher
not in the study, but in
the prayer closet."

- E.M. Bounds

Prayer shows our humble dependence on God. If we feel that we are capable of preaching in our own power, God will allow us to do so. If we are preaching for our own glory, we will not have the Spirit's anointing. God said, "My glory I will not give to another" (Isaiah 48:11). Our motivation for seeking God's anointing must be God's glory, not our own.

²³ Adapted from E. M. Bounds, *Power through Prayer*.

Lesson 10 Assignments

- (1) You will take a test based on this lesson. Study the test questions carefully in preparation.
- (2) Using the principles you have learned during this course, preach a 15-20 minute sermon in class. Each member of the class will complete an assessment form found at the back of this course book. By comparing your classmates' assessments of this sermon to their assessments of your earlier sermons, you can evaluate your improvement in your ability to communicate effectively.

Lesson 10 Test

- (1) Name two ways a preacher must prepare himself for effective ministry.
- (2) What did Paul tell Timothy to fight for?
- (3) In what two ways does the Holy Spirit prepare a preacher?
- (4) Define *illumination*.
- (5) What is the key to effectiveness in ministry as demonstrated by Jesus?
- (6) According to E.M. Bounds, what is the price of [anointing] in preaching?

Speaking Assessment Form					
Speaker's Name: _____					
Scripture Text: _____					
Sermon Title: _____					
Date: _____					
Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____					
Circle the correct score ("5" is excellent and "1" is very poor). Total all points.					
Preparation (Notes or Sermon Outline)					
Theme (clear; arises from text; used in outline)	1	2	3	4	5
Outline (based upon theme; logical progression)	1	2	3	4	5
Facts (accurate and appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5
Creativity (new ideas and approaches)	1	2	3	4	5
Application (appropriate and clear)	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness (readable; major points highlighted)	1	2	3	4	5
Completeness (written completely or summarized)	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation					
Introduction (brief; interest; motivation)	1	2	3	4	5
Transitions (moves easily from one point to next)	1	2	3	4	5
Use of scripture (supporting scriptures, illustrations)	1	2	3	4	5
Use of statistics, stories & illustrations (clear, relevant)	1	2	3	4	5
Use of humor (appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5
Mastery of subject content (confident)	1	2	3	4	5
Eye contact with audience (regular)	1	2	3	4	5
Use of visual aids (appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5
Time management (used time wisely)	1	2	3	4	5
Conclusion (reinforces theme; makes application)	1	2	3	4	5

Presence (Personality and Expression)					
Manner (confident, apologetic, enthusiastic; nervous)	1	2	3	4	5
Voice and pace of speech (clear; audible)	1	2	3	4	5
Language (appropriate for audience)	1	2	3	4	5
Fluency (articulate; free use of words)	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance/Dress (neatness, appropriateness)	1	2	3	4	5
Facial expression (appropriate for subject)	1	2	3	4	5
Participation (from Audience)					
Verbal communication (amens, laughter, groans)	1	2	3	4	5
Non-Verbal communication (smiles, yawns, bored looks)	1	2	3	4	5
Additional Notes:					
Total Marks: _____ Assessor's Name: _____					

Record of Assignments

Student Name _____

On the table below, initial when each assignment has been completed. The tests are considered "complete" when the student achieves a score of 70% or higher. All assignments must be successfully completed in order to receive a Certificate from Shepherds Global Classroom.

Lesson	Test	Assignment 1	Assignment 2
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Application for a Certificate of Completion from Shepherds Global Classroom may be completed on our webpage at www.shepherdsglobal.org. Certificates will be digitally transmitted from the president of SGC to instructors and facilitators who complete the application on behalf of their student(s).