

**Preaching Practicum**  
**The Theology and Practice of Christian Proclamation**

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## Course Assignments

1. Memorize the following passages to help in your development of a Biblical theology of preaching. These will be written from memory as a part of the final examination.

Monday—Romans 10:14-15

Tuesday—II Timothy 4:1-2

Wednesday—I Corinthians 4:1-2

Thursday—II Corinthians 4:5

Friday—II Thessalonians 2:1-3

2. Prepare three 4-5 page full-content sermon outlines following the principles given in the course and using the sample sermons as a pattern for formatting.



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# **Does God Approve of My Preaching?**

## **An Answer from the Pivotal Text of the New Testament**

### **Introduction**

- God clearly commands the man of the Word to proclaim His Truth; proclamation unleashes the power of the Word.
- God not only commands that we preach the Word but dictates how we are to do this task.
- The central text for a correct theology of preaching from the New Testament is II Timothy 4:2, found in the famous “last words of Paul” section II Timothy 4:1-5.

### **I. God’s approach: \_\_\_\_\_ proclaim the message of the Word.**

*“Preach the Word”*

- A. Proclaim authoritatively as a response to a divine imperative.
- B. Proclaim authoritatively in a manner that fits the task.

### **II. God’s approach: \_\_\_\_\_ exposit the message of the Word.**

- C. To accurately exposit means comprehensive exposure to all the canon.
- D. To accurately exposit means to provide clear explanation of the obscure and complex.
- E. To accurately exposit means a systematic treatment of Scripture.



**III. God's approach: \_\_\_\_\_ prepare the message of the Word.**

*"Be instant in season, out of season"*

- A. Thoroughly prepare as a spiritual obligation.
- B. Thoroughly prepare regardless of circumstances.

**IV. God's approach: \_\_\_\_\_ apply the message of the Word.**

*"reprove, rebuke, exhort"*

- A. Appropriately apply based on the truths of the text.
- B. Appropriately apply with a balanced view of human needs.

**V. God's approach: \_\_\_\_\_ present the message of the Word.**

*"with all longsuffering and doctrine"*

- A. Compassionately present the message to those in spiritual failure.
- B. Compassionately present the message to those in spiritual ignorance.



## Some Grammatical Observations on II Timothy 4:2

- The five aorist imperatives: all of the verbs in this verse are in the aorist imperative which stresses the urgent, forceful emphasis being given in these commands.
- The first aorist imperative: κη,ρυξον (preach) is developed by the four aorist imperatives that follow in the structure of this sentence.
- The synonyms in the sentence, ἠλεγξον (reprove) and επιτιμησον (rebuke) may be used interchangeably in the language, but, as is true with all synonyms, they each have their own shade of meaning when found in a context together like this one. The verb translated “reprove” means to present the truth so as to produce conviction of sin and hopefully repentance from it. The verb translated “rebuke” means to place blame for sin. This specifically stresses the importance in preaching of placing the responsibility for sin squarely on the shoulders of the sinner.
- The antonyms in the sentence: ἠλεγξον–επιτιμησον vs. παρακα,λεσον. The final verb in this contrasting set of verbs is translated “exhort.” This means to urge, encourage, and comfort. Clearly, our preaching is to be carefully balanced to fit the varied needs of our hearers. We are not only to confront sin but also give hope to our hearers about ministry progress, personal growth, and the glorious future with our Lord.
- The final modifying phrase of the sentence: “with all longsuffering and doctrine.” First, there are to be no limits to our efforts in this regard. Enough is never enough. The term translated “longsuffering” is μακροθυμια which means patience with the provocations and failures of people. This is in contrast to the other word translated both patience and endurance in the New Testament (υ[πομονη,ν) which means to endure in difficult circumstances, not primarily or solely caused by difficult people. All of our preaching is also to be done with an eye toward teaching (διδαχνη/), translated “doctrine” at the end of the sentence. Ignorance of the Word is oftentimes the cause of partial obedience which is just another form of disobedience.



## Insightful Statements by the Writers

- “There is an increasing need, especially as the process of urbanization continues and standards of education rise, for Christian ministers to exercise in the teeming cities of the developing world a systematic expository preaching ministry, ‘to proclaim the Word . . . with all teaching.’”

John W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of II Timothy*, p. 109

- “. . . for what may seem to the careless or lukewarm unseasonable occasions for making mention of the truth, will often by the zealous and faithful pastor be found opportunities for usefulness.”

Patrick Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 383.

- “Today in the work of ‘heralding’ or ‘preaching’ careful exposition of the text is certainly included. But genuine heralding or preaching is lively, not dry; timely, not stale. It is the earnest proclamation of the news initiated by God. It is not the abstract speculation on views excogitated by man.”

William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, p. 310.

- “His work must be characterized by an attitude of the utmost longsuffering and self-restraint, resisting every temptation to impatient anger at the obstinacy and perverseness of those being dealt with.”

D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Timothy*, p. 105

- “But supremely, he was to ‘proclaim the Word’; this before all things was man’s great need, and this therefore was the Lord’s pastoral servant’s highest and incessant task.”

H. C. G. Moule, *The Second Epistle to Timothy*, p. 128.

- “The aorist imperatives emphasize the obligation of prompt action. Be a sentinel ever on duty.”

E. K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 152.

- “Christian reproof without the grace of long-suffering has often led to a harsh, censorious attitude intensely harmful to the cause of Christ.”

Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 166-167.

- “But we need to know the great truths of the Scripture in order that we may learn how to behave in accordance with the revelation God has given. Sincerity of purpose is not enough. We are to be sanctified by the truth.”

H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the First and Second Epistles of Timothy*, p. 235



# What Preaching is Supposed to Be: A Lexical Theology of Preaching

## Introduction

- Words alone are only the beginning point of meaning.
- The science of lexicography depends heavily on context for the determination of meaning.
- Words in their context shed great light on the task of preaching.

## I. New Testament terms for the act of imparting the Word

### A. Teach:

**did,a,skw**

I Corinthians 4:17 “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Chrsit, as I teach every where in every church.”

Principal observations:

### B. Admonish:

**nouqete,w**



Acts 20:31 “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

Principal observations:



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**C. Make Disciples:**

**maqhteu,w**

Matthew 28:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Principle Observations:

**D. Preach:**

**khru,ssw**

II Corinthians 4:5 “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Principal observations:

**E. Announce good news:**

**euvaggeli,zw**

II Corinthians 10:16 “To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand.”

Principal observations:

**F. Speak boldly:**

**parrhsia,swmai**

Ephesians 6:20 “For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Principal observations:



**G. Reprove/rebuke:**

**evle,gcw / evpitima,w**

II Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

Principal observations:

**II. New Testament terms for the one imparting the Word**

**A. Shepherd:**

**poimh,n**

Ephesians 4:11 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”

Principal observations:

**B. Teacher:**

**dida,skoloj**

II Timothy 1:11 “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Principal observations:

**C. Ambassador:**

**presbeu,w**



Ephesians 6:20 “For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Principal observations:



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**D. Evangelist:**

**euvaggelisth,j**

Ephesians 4:11 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”

Principal observations:

**E. Elder:**

**presbu,teroj**

I Timothy 5:17 “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

Principal observations:

**F. Bishop:**

**evpi,skopoj**

I Timothy 3:1 “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

Principal observations:

**G. Preacher:**

**kh/rux**

II Timothy 1:11 “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”



Principal observations:



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## H. Stewardv

### **oivkono,moj**

I Corinthians 4:1 “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

Principal observations:

## I. Apostle

### **avpo,stoloj**

II Timothy 1:11 “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Principal observations:



# The Importance of a Clear Conscience: A Biblical Key to Powerful Preaching

## Introduction

- The Greek term for conscience: **sunei,dhsij**
- Frequency of use in the New Testament: *30 times*
- Definitions

“the consciousness man has of himself in his relation to God, manifesting itself in the form of self-testimony”

**Cremer**, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 215

“spiritual awareness of god; ...moral consciousness”

**Arndt and Gingrich**, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 794

“innate discernment, self-judging consciousness”

**Abbott-Smith**, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 427

“the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other”

**Thayer**, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 602



- Theological Scope of the Idea: All men have a conscience. The unregenerate conscience bears witness, may be defiled (permanently stained), and seared (made morally insensitive). The regenerate conscience is part of the *heart* concept in the New Testament. It is the channel of the Spirit's witness to the believer. It may be good, bad, weak, wounded, or defiled. Its proper function depends on the knowledge of and response to the Word and the unrestricted influence of the Spirit in the heart.

**I. The great advantages of a good conscience in the ministry of preaching.**

A. It preserves from the tragedy of \_\_\_\_\_.

“Holding faith, and *a good conscience*; which some having put away, concerning the faith have made shipwreck: of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

I Timothy 1:19-20

1. The function of the good conscience in preventing shipwreck.
2. The action of “putting away” a good conscience resulting in shipwreck.

B. It serves as a vital \_\_\_\_\_ of loving ministry.

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of a good conscience*, and faith unfeigned.”

I Timothy 1:5

1. No mix of inner pollution: a pure heart.
2. No mix of inner testimony: a good conscience.
3. No mix of motive: faith unfeigned.



C. It \_\_\_\_\_ of genuine concern for those we serve.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

Romans 9:1-3

1. The witnessing function of the conscience.
2. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer’s conscience.

## II. The demanding process of maintaining a clear conscience as a proclaimer of the Word.

**“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men.”**

**Paul, the Apostle  
Acts 24:16**

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the process.

*“Herein do I exercise myself”*

1. Paul’s ethical preoccupation.
2. Paul’s description of the nature of his faith in his defense.
3. Paul’s strenuous effort.

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the process.

*“void of offense toward God and toward men”*

1. Reflects the great Biblical summary of all the law of God.



2. Encompasses both commission and omission.

C. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the ongoing process.

1. Step #1: The Holy Spirit as guide through conscience.

2. Step #2: Initial Choice.

3. Step #3: The Holy Spirit as judge through conscience.

4. Step #4: Second Choice.

5. Step #5: Result: Christlikeness or carnality.

### **III. Ethical tension points for the preacher seeking a clear conscience.**

A. Concerns about preparation of \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Let everything be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses.

2. Be thorough.

3. Give credit where it is due.

4. No pretending about your knowledge.

B. Concerns about righteous \_\_\_\_\_.

1. What happens to the facts in the heat of preaching?



2. Is this really real or is this really fictional?

3. Are you crying or are you laughing?



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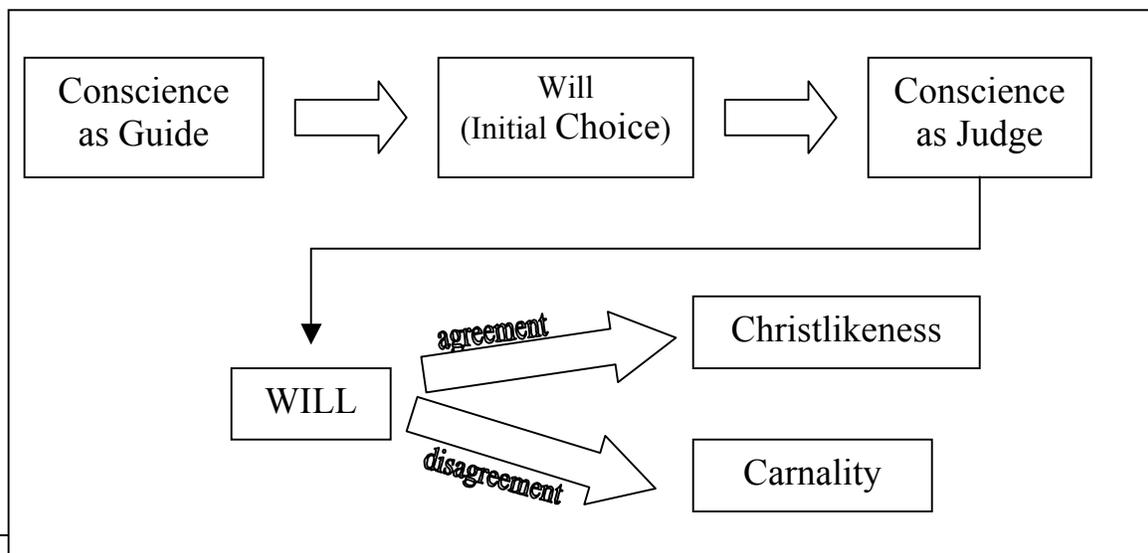
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4. Are you saying only what you have to say?
5. Is this sensationalism really necessary?

C. Concerns about your \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Have you responded spiritually to the message?
2. Do you have a long-standing problem with what you are preaching?
3. Is there somebody out there you have sinfully offended?
4. Are you about to go public with a private matter?
5. Have you decided to use your pulpit as public platform for getting even?
6. What are you hiding?



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## New Testament References to **sunei,dhsij**

Acts 23:1  
Acts 24:16

Romans 2:15  
Romans 9:1  
Romans 13:5

I Corinthians 8:7  
I Corinthians 8:10  
I Corinthians 8:12  
I Corinthians 10:25  
I Corinthians 10:27  
I Corinthians 10:29

II Corinthians 1:12  
II Corinthians 4:2  
II Corinthians 5:11

I Timothy 1:5  
I Timothy 1:19  
I Timothy 3:9  
I Timothy 4:2

II Timothy 1:13

Titus 1:15

Hebrews 9:9  
Hebrews 9:14  
Hebrews 10:12  
Hebrews 10:22  
Hebrews 13:18

I Peter 2:19  
I Peter 3:16  
I Peter 3:2

James Hope Moulton and A.S. Geden, *Concordance to the Greek New Testament*



# **Illumination: An Essential for In-Depth Preaching**

## *I Corinthians 2:6-16*

### **I. The nature of the wisdom acquired by the Spirit's illumination (vv. 6-16)**

#### **A. An ageless wisdom, in a passing age (v. 6)**

1. Wisdom of a spiritual nature
2. Not the wisdom of this age

#### **B. A hidden wisdom, revealed for our glory (vv. 7-8)**

1. Always God's intent (v. 7)
2. To bring the believer to full potential (v. 7)
3. Concealed from the great ones (v. 8)

#### **C. An unknowable wisdom, known by the Spirit (vv. 9-10)**

1. Not knowable by normal means (v. 9a)
2. Knowable by the Spirit of God (vv. 9b-10)



## II. The Holy Spirit's work in Scripture illumination (vv. 11–13)

### A. Based on His omniscience (v. 11)

1. Only a man knows his own thoughts
2. Only the Spirit knows God's thoughts

### B. Based on His indwelling (v. 12)

1. Received at a particular point in time
2. Received instead of the spirit of the world

### C. Based on His inspiration (v. 13)

1. Not by human wisdom taught words (v. 13a)
2. But rather Spirit-taught words (v. 13b)



### **III. The only correct outcome of the Spirit's illumination: application (vv. 14–16)**

A. An impossible outcome for the natural man (v. 14)

1. His unfortunate moral response to Scripture
2. His unfortunate intellectual response to Scripture

B. A normal outcome for the spiritual man (vv. 15–16)

1. He practices discernment (v. 15a).
2. He is improperly evaluated by men (v. 15b).
3. He is accurately evaluated by the Lord (v. 16).



# Preparing the Full Sermon Outline

## Introduction

- Consider all of the elements that should be included in the sermon.
- Consider the pattern to follow in the arrangement of each of these elements in order to form the entire sermon outline.

### I. Include all the elements of a full sermon outline.

#### A. First, the title.

Exp: Use brief, interesting phraseology. This is basically your preaching theme/proposition worded in an interesting way.

#### B. Second, preaching theme.

Exp: This is the brief phrase which is the central idea of your sermon. This will come up repeatedly throughout your sermon.

#### C. Third, proposition.

Exp: This is the narrowing and focusing of your preaching theme by stating it in full sentence form as the summary of your sermon and the goal for the audience.

#### D. Fourth, interrogative.

Exp: This is the question you will ask of your proposition using one of the special interrogative terms: who, what, when, why, how, where.

#### E. Fifth, transitional sentence.

Exp: This is the logical response to your interrogative and includes a key word which is a noun in plural form which represents the general nature of the main points.



**F. Sixth, introduction.**

Exp: This should be at most a half page. It should include something to get attention, create a need for your proposition, give background, and state your proposition and transitional sentence.

**G. Seventh, main points.**

Exp: These should be stated as full sentences and should include the preaching theme so you stay in focus logically. They are the major parts of the topic you are developing.

Exp: Wording should be direct, clear, brief, and grammatically parallel.

**H. Eighth, subordinate points.**

Exp: These will develop your main points and should each include a phrase that summarizes each main point.

**I. Ninth, discussion.**

Exp: This includes explanation, application, and argumentation.

Exp: This will also include methods: quotation, examples, statistics, and stories that will accomplish the three content goals (explanation, application, and argumentation).

**J. Tenth, conclusion.**

Exp: Written out in full and will be about a half page. It should (1) restate the proposition, (2) summarize the main points, (3) make a strong appeal, and (4) give climax to the whole sermon.

**Transition:** Once you are clear about all the elements to be included in the outline, you can proceed to put them all together.



## II. Follow the right format for the full sermon outline.

Title:  
Text:  
Preaching Theme:  
Proposition:  
Interrogative:  
Transition statement:

### Introduction: (full content)

#### I.

##### A.

##### 1.

exp: (summary of what you will say)

app/ill: (summary of what you will say)

arg: (summary of what you will say)

##### 2.

exp./ill: (summary of what you will say)

app: (summary of what you will say)

##### B.

Exp: (summary of what you will say)

App: (summary of what you will say)

##### C.

Arg: (summary of what you will say)

App: (summary of what you will say)



**Transition:**

**II.**

(etc.)

Conclusion: (full content)

Total length: 4 or 5 pages

**Transition:** Getting everything on paper is important. Now you must take further steps to actually get ready to deliver the sermon.

**III. Prepare the full sermon outline for deliver.**

- A. Use a small notebook.

Exp: transfer your notes onto half sheets of regular size paper. Include everything you had on your full size sheets. Color code your points for easy reading.

- B. Memorize the basic outline.

Exp: This will include the introduction, the conclusion, the main divisions, subdivisions, and transition statements. This will make you much more comfortable standing before people. If you forget during delivery, just glance down at your outline.

- C. Practice the sermon before you preach.

Exp: This will aid your memory, clarify the way you want to express yourself on certain points, and give you an idea of how long the sermon will turn out to be. It is a good idea to go over the sermon five times from start to finish. Stand while you are doing this and speak out loud.

- D. Ask God for grace to preach the way you should.



Exp: Two texts that are important about this are I Corinthians 2:1-5 and II Corinthians 9:8. God will empower you by His grace to preach His Word if you are humble and dependent on Him.



## Conclusion

- Thorough preparation is crucial for effective preaching; it doesn't just happen by accident.
  
- You must take the following steps:
  - (a) You must include all the essential elements.
  
  - (b) You must follow the right format in the outline.
  
  - (c) You must prepare for delivery of the full sermon.
  
- Remember II Timothy 4:2: “Preach the Word: be instant in season and out of season...”



**Title:** The Usefulness of the Bible in Life

**Text:** Psalm 19:7-11

**Theme:** The Bible's usefulness in Spiritual Life

**Proposition:** The Bible is a useful tool for the building of your spiritual life.

**Speaker's Purpose:** I will persuade my congregation of the usefulness of the Bible in building their spiritual lives.

**Interrogative:** Why is the Bible a useful tool for building your spiritual life?

**Transition:** The Bible is a useful tool for building your spiritual life for the following reasons.

## INTRODUCTION

If you were called on this morning to give a lecture about the Bible, there are varying approaches you could take. You could take an introductory approach, discussing who wrote each book, when, from where they were written, to whom, and why. You could pursue a theological approach, delineating the doctrines of inspiration, inerrancy, transmission, canonization, and preservation. You may choose to follow a literary approach, investigating structure, vocabulary, setting, and the particular emphases of each book. All of these approaches are proper and may provide help.

No approach to the Bible is more useful, though, than seeing it as a tool for the building of your spiritual life. The Bible says this repeatedly in many ways. It describes itself as a priceless possession that makes one rich and as light for the dark path of confusion and sin. It presents itself as rain that produces life and fruit. It is portrayed as food for the hungry soul, fire to burn away our chaff, and a hammer to crush our hard hearts. The Bible is a sword that cuts to the heart of our motives, a mirror that reveals to us what we really are, and water that cleanses our souls. It is seed planted in the heart which brings forth spiritual fruit.

Psalm 19 is a psalm of revelation. God reveals Himself through nature verses one through six teach us. He reveals Himself to man and must be responded to according to verses twelve through fourteen. His primary way of revealing Himself and His will is through His Word, the Bible. This the writer presents in verses seven through eleven.

The center section of this psalm reveals why the Bible is useful for the building of your spiritual life. Let's consider the reasons it gives.



**I. The Bible is the remedy for our spiritual weakness (vv. 7-9).**

**A. It weans a man from evil (v. 7).**

Explanation: The Bible converts the soul which means it causes a man to renounce and disown evil.

Explanation: The Bible accomplishes this by presenting a complete standard (“perfect”) for man’s attainment.

Explanation: This is a process as is implied by the phrase “the law of the Lord.”

Argumentation/Quotation: That this is true is seen in II Corinthians 3:18: “But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

**B. It delivers a man from spiritual naivety (v. 7).**

Explanation: It makes “wise the simple.” It helps a man see things as they really are spiritually and make right choices on the basis of that perception.

Application: What will keep the Christian from being misled by poor leaders or his own imagination?

Application/Illustration: Charles, a member of a Southern Baptist church, professed that he knew Christ but refused to see anything significant in the debates in the convention about the authority of Scripture.

Explanation: Scriptures can be depended upon to provide wisdom because they are a sure testimony to God’s character and thinking (“the testimony of the Lord is sure”).

**C. It leads to spiritual contentment (v. 8).**

Explanation: The Bible gives us our obligation (“statutes”), which are morally and practically correct (“right”), and when obeyed will lead to happiness (“rejoicing the heart”).

Application: You cannot separate the way you feel from what you do.



**D. It stimulates to a spiritual zeal (v. 8).**

Explanation: The Bible provides an explicit contract which God will abide by (“the commandment of the Lord is pure”).

Explanation: He has promised that He will strengthen and encourage as well as make our obligation known to us (“enlighten our eyes”).

Argumentation/Illustration: Mary Slessor, pioneer missionary to Africa, demonstrated astounding endurance against sickness, horrible living conditions, and the bias of those who thought a woman should not do the work she was doing.

Argumentation/Quotation: Psalm 119:25, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.”

**E. It brings stability to your relationship with God (v. 9).**

Explanation: The “fear of the Lord” is the basic attitude encouraged in the Bible and is pure and has a purifying effect (“clean”).

Explanation: The “fear of the Lord” endures forever in the sense that it provides the approach for living from an eternal perspective.

Application: This reverence and wholesome fear of marring our relationship with God and bringing chastening on ourselves is the spiritual adhesive that causes us to adhere to God and His ways faithfully.

**F. It builds faith in God’s actions (v. 9).**

Explanation: The just or fair acts of God recorded (“the judgments of the Lord”) are right and consistent with His nature (“true and righteous altogether”).

Argumentation/Quotation: Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

Argumentation/Illustration: Loss of two sons compared; both to cancer, both young elementary age boys, both victorious in death. The parents of one were bitter because of weakness in the Word. The parents of the other were strong because of faith through the Word.



Argumentation/Quotation: George Keith in “How Firm a Foundation,”  
“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word;  
What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled.”

**Transition:** The Bible is the panacea for our spiritual weaknesses. It is the cure all. Beyond addressing our problems, it gives aid in positive, spiritual growth. It helps us establish proper values.

## **II. The Bible helps us establish proper values (vv. 10-11).**

### **A. The spiritual is of more value than the material (v. 10).**

Application/Quotation: Our prayer should be Psalm 119:30, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”

### **B. The spiritual is of more value than pleasure (v. 10).**

Explanation: David had found the contents of the Bible more pleasurable than eating refined honey (“sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb”).

Application: The pleasure of relaxation, friends, entertainment is right in the right quantity and at the right time.

Application: Pleasure can bring refreshment and a hearty return to work. When it is an end in itself it is a problem.

Application: Pleasure does not build for the future, for eternity.

Argumentation: The author is asserting that it is possible to enjoy the spiritual content of the Bible and obedience to God’s commands more than temporal pursuits.

### **C. The spiritual is of more value than the sinful (v. 11).**

Explanation: The commands of God warn us of the dangers of the sinful (“moreover by them is thy servant warned”).

Argumentation/Quotation: Psalm 119:133 says, “Order my steps in thy word: and let not iniquity have dominion over me.”

Argumentation/Quotation: C.H. Spurgeon said, “The Bible should be our mentor, our monitor, and our keeper of conscience.”



Explanation: The keeping of God's commands brings eternal reward and reward in this life ("and in keeping of them there is great reward").

Argumentation/Quotation: Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

## CONCLUSION

The Bible is spiritually useful. It is a tool to be used to build your spiritual life. It is no mere textbook. It is a manual for living. No wonder Luther said the soul could do without all things but the Word of God. It is a remedy for our spiritual weaknesses and helps us establish proper spiritual values.

Once Robert Moffat, the great pioneer missionary to Africa who inspired the work of David Livingstone, was on a long trip. He came to a village, faint and hungry. The natives appeared anything but friendly. Soon a woman appeared from one of the huts and put bread, meat, milk, and fruit before him. She was about to leave after putting it down but Moffat stopped her and asked her why she was treating him with such kindness. She took an old worn, Dutch Bible from beneath her outer garment and exclaimed, "This is the oil that makes my lamp burn. This is the fountain whence I drink."

This woman had discovered that the Bible is useful as a tool to build your spiritual life. If the pursuit of pleasure or the allure of the material has caused you to no longer be a spiritual help to others, resolve anew to use the Word to your spiritual benefit. Build your life for God with this useful tool!



**Text:** Hebrews 10:19-25

**Style:** Expository

**Theme:** Christian perseverance

**Proposition:** In light of Christ's atoning work, believers should persevere in faith

**Speaker's purpose:** I want to motivate my audience to persevere in the faith and give them practical steps to persevere.

**Interrogative:** How can professing believers persevere in faith

**Transition:** In considering Scriptural reasons for perseverance and following Scriptural exhortations to perseverance, every believer can persevere in the faith.

**Text: Hebrews 10:19-25**

Florence Chadwick, an American who lived from 1918 to 1995, was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. On the Fourth of July in 1951, she attempted to swim from Catalina Island to the California coast, a stretch of 21 miles. The challenge was not so much the distance, but the bone-chilling waters of the Pacific. Anyone attempting such a task is in need of iron perseverance. That day, a dense fog lay over the entire area, making it impossible for her to see land. After about 15 hours in the water, and within a half mile of her goal, Chadwick gave up.

Unfortunately, professing Christians may find themselves in the same position Florence Chadwick found herself in. They are in the icy water on their way to their heavenly rest, but they are tempted to give up on this "Christianity thing." Perhaps bitter circumstances, pressure, or severe depression are crowding them away from the faith. "It is just too hard to live the Christian life." "It's just not worth all the sacrifice." If you are having thoughts like these, this passage is God's message to you. Professing Christians shipwreck! Fundamentalist pastors apostasize. People you know will depart from the faith. What will you do to motivate them to persevere?

The passage starts a section in the book of Hebrews that gives the primary applications of the first nine and a half chapters. In those chapters, the writer has been explaining God's perfect answer for man's shortcomings: Jesus Christ, God's Son and mankind's Priest. In these verses, the author of Hebrews first gives two reasons for persevering that are rooted in Christ's atonement. Then he gives three commands that are the antidote for apostasy. The temptation is to shrink back from approaching God (10:38), to throw away your confession in doubt of God's character, and to shun God's built-in accountability of the Christian community. The commands go cross grain to this temptation and exhort us to do the very opposite of what we are tempted to do.

**Proposition:** In light of Christ's atoning work, believers should persevere in faith.





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## I. The reason for Christian perseverance: The work of Christ (vv. 19-21)

Explanation: The writer starts this section with giving us two good reasons why we should obey the commands he is about to give. They are rooted in the work of Christ. The two reasons are a loose summary of the preceding chapters.

### A. We have boldness concerning entrance into the Holy Place (vv. 19-20)

Explanation: The writer has argued in detail about the restrictions placed on the people in regard to the earthly holy of holies. Hebrews 9 points out that only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, and only once a year (9:7). The Spirit was communicating to all who approached that God was keeping sinful man at a distance (9:8). For any man to enter into that most sacred place arbitrarily would have been unthinkable to a Jew. However, the unthinkable has become reality. Man now has free access to God. Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly is merely a copy, and offered His own blood as an effective sacrifice on our behalf. This opened the way into the most holy place for us. In this context, the word “boldness” has reference to an objective confidence in the presence of an authority. Out of the objective confidence that comes through our right standing with God we may also display a subjective boldness to do what normally would be considered a fearful thing.

Application: God desires you to have full confidence in His presence. Unfortunately, the conscience at times works improperly and continues to accuse a believer concerning his past. In that case the conscience needs to be adjusted to the Scripture’s statements concerning complete forgiveness of sin. If you fit in this category, I recommend that you soak your conscience in specific verses that expound our complete forgiveness in order to adjust your conscience Scripturally.

### B. We have a great priest (v. 21)

Explanation: The second reason the writer gives for persevering is the ministry Christ exercises as priest. As priest, Christ is merciful and faithful (Heb. 2:17). He can sympathize with our weakness in time of temptation, since He Himself was also partaker of human flesh and subject to all the temptations that accompany that state (Heb. 4:15). As sinless priest, He lives forever and is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him (Heb. 7:24-27). As priest, he obtained what no earthly priest could ever obtain with a sacrifice, eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11-12).

Application: Since this is true, brethren, shall we not press on? Shall we not continue in our profession of Christ? Who would give up such a pearl after having found it? In light of Christ’s atoning work, those who are tempted to turn away from their profession of Christ must instead persevere.



## II. The essence of Christian perseverance (vv. 22-25a)

Having given two great reasons to continue with Christ, the writer now gives practical steps in perseverance. These are not merely suggestions, but exhortations. To disregard these steps is to disregard God's commands to us.

### A. Draw near in faith (v. 22)

Explanation: The first step is to draw near. Although this verse does not tell us who or what we are to draw near to, notice what Hebrews 4:16 says: "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The writer is exhorting us to draw near to God. Those experiencing temptations to depart from their Christian profession are exhorted to draw near God's throne to obtain all the mercy and grace that is required to withstand that temptation. This is not too good to be true. The writer has just assured us that all true believers have an objective confidence to enter into God's very presence (v. 19).

Explanation: The manner in which we should draw near is with a sincere heart, (that is, a heart that is characterized by truthfulness) and complete confidence of faith. Faith is essential to the act of drawing near to God.

Application: The first step in perseverance is drawing near to God. This is done primarily in private through prayer. We ought to come with a heart that is honest about its own condition and the struggle we have with persevering. Have you ever fully squared up with God, without casting down your gaze, confessing all your sin and forsaking them right there and then? It is so easy to read, study, and memorize the Bible and all the while never really draw near to God. This ought to be a daily occurrence. The first step in falling away in apostasy is neglecting drawing near.

### B. Hold fast your confession (v. 23)

Explanation: The idea behind the verb is to prevent something from leaving, as if we must lock it up or imprison it.

Illustration: I broke my arm once as a boy. It happened when I was walking a friend's German Shepherd down the street. My friend had told me whatever happened, not to let the dog get away. However, when I was half way down the street, he whistled for the dog. The end result was that the dog pulled me right off my feet. I landed on my arm, which broke, and then the dog dragged me down the street a ways, until I finally let go of the leash.

Explanation: That is the kind of grip we must exercise on our confession. This is not let go and let God! Our confession is that which we profess,



especially publicly. While the first exhortation dealt with the faith in our hearts, this one deals with the confession of our mouth, which is an important part of salvation (cf. Rom. 10:9-10). Matthew 10:32 says: “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.”

Application: In John 12:42 we read that “many even of the authorities believed in [Jesus], but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it.” Are you embarrassed to confess Christ before your gay colleague, or your outspoken liberal democratic boss? Are there people at your work that still do not know that you are a Christian because you have deliberately manipulated conversations to steer away from spiritual things? Why did you keep your mouth shut last week when that golden opportunity to confess Christ before your lost neighbor came up? Those things are the first signs of departure from the faith.

C. Stir up one another to love (vv. 24-25a)

Explanation: The last exhortation involves our relationship with our fellow Christians. This command provides the human accountability in Christian perseverance. The English translations of the verse seem to communicate that we must be engaged in thinking up ways to provoke others to love and good works. However, the verb “consider” does not refer to creative thinking, but to careful observation. The writer is telling us to carefully look at and examine one another. Of course, the motive behind this is not to be faultfinding, but to watch out for warning signs of failing faith.

Illustration: If you have had your driver’s license for some amount of time, you may have been in a situation where you had to drive through the night. It may have been the passenger’s responsibility to keep an eye on you to make sure you were still awake. Perhaps you even deliberately engaged in conversation to keep awake. This is the kind of accountability Hebrews 10:24 is talking about. When you go through the Christian life as a lone ranger, you may fall asleep and wreck your car. When we watch over one another, there is a much greater likelihood that we will safely arrive at our final destination.

Explanation: The author explains that this kind of accountability only works if two factors are present. First, there must be regular contact with other Christians during assembly times. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves. Please note that this refers not merely to contact with other Christians, but to the official meetings of the Christian assembly. It was Paul’s practice to gather believers together on the first day of the week. Second, there must be loving exhortation among the brethren. If one of those elements is missing, the accountability becomes ineffective and worthless.



Application: We probably don't struggle much with attendance at church, but how are we doing at encouraging fellow believers through loving exhortation. Are you watching over your friends and fellow members of the body? Are you allowing others to check up on you? I would encourage you to set a goal to have at least one serious spiritual conversation before or after every service. Make it your ministry in your church! Also, I would encourage you to develop some deep friendships that will provide for some accountability. Don't be afraid to really open your heart to your closest friends. I don't think there is a more powerful force that will keep you in the faith than the mutual watch care of a true friend.

### **Conclusion:**

My friend, Christianity is no game! Eternity is in the balance. Although I believe in the perseverance of true saints, it is dangerous to become smug in self-confidence. A "that-will-never-happen-to-me" attitude is the first warning sign that it is happening to you.

When she was young, Florence Chadwick wanted desperately to be a great *speed* swimmer. At the age of six she persuaded her parents to enter her in a 50-yard race. She came in last, so she practiced every day for the new year. Again she entered and lost. At 14 she tried for the national backstroke championship but came in second. At 18 she tried out for Olympic speed swimming and came in fourth—only three made the team. Frustrated, she gave it up, married, and moved on to other interests. As she matured however, Florence began to wonder if she might not have done better if she had specialized in endurance swimming, something that came more naturally. So, with the help of her father, she began swimming distances again. Twelve years after she had failed to make the Olympic team, Florence Chadwick swam the English Channel, breaking Gertrude Ederle's 24-year-old record. Let me encourage you today not to have a sprint mentality. In the parable of the sower the seed that fell on rocky soil sprang up right away. These are the sprinters who take off like lightning. Unfortunately they don't endure, because in time of temptation they fall away (Lk. 8:13). How tragic! Do not let yourself be one of these! Instead, persevere!



**Title:** “Dead to Sin?”

**Text:** I Peter 4:1-11

**Theme:** living as dead to sin

**Proposition:** Because you are dead to sin, you must live for God and others.

**Speaker’s Purpose:** I want the listeners to recognize they are dead to sin, and then to choose to live in that reality.

**Interrogative:** But what difference can being dead to sin make in your life today?

**Transition:** God’s Word will demand two responses of you today.

**Introduction:** My uncle set out alone on his mountain bike on a Colorado trail one afternoon in 2003. Who wouldn’t enjoy mountain biking in majestic Colorado? Blue skies, white, puffy clouds, little humidity, and panoramic vistas of mountain peaks. But you know what the experts say—you shouldn’t go out alone. My uncle did. Would this mistake prove fatal? As my uncle progressed along, his serene bike ride suddenly took a unique turn for the worse. Without warning a rattlesnake got tangled in his wheel and struck at him, its fangs and venom landing only a glancing blow to his boot, thankfully. The serpent circled up again as the tire came around, but this time, its strike partially landed on my uncle’s leg. My uncle found himself snakebit all alone on a remote trail, far from his truck. What was running through his mind now? Was he thinking, “I wonder if I’m going to make it?” Very likely, but as he ventured back to his truck, the effects didn’t seem too severe—“Why don’t I feel bad yet?” Surprisingly, the snakebite was hardly affecting him. Why? On several occasions black widow spiders have bitten my uncle. Now he is almost immune to their poison. As a result, he may be almost dead to rattlesnake venom as well. It has no control over him.

Unfortunately, the venom of sin is controlling you. You are dead to it, but you don’t live like it. Even last night you may have indulged in sinful desires surfing the web or downing a 6-pack. You do what you want to do, but I Peter 4 has the answer for you. The answer is—you are dead to sin!

But what difference can being dead to sin make in your life today? Actually, it can make all the difference in your spiritual walk. **Because you are dead to sin, you must live for God and others. God’s Word will demand two responses of you today.**

**I. Because you live for sinful desires and yourself too much, you must think like Christ (1-6)**

—This is the first imperative of the passage.

**A. Decide to believe you are dead to sin (1-2)**



1. Christ died for sin in the flesh (1).

Explanation: He “suffered in the flesh,” meaning He died for sins—I Peter 3:18 supports this interpretation (cf. Romans 6:10).

Illustration: Many years ago in a town in our land, several public high school girls repented and believed in Christ. Life for them needed to change in specific ways, but how? Shortly thereafter they received an invitation from some boys in their high school to attend the school dance. Here were new believers faced with a crisis. Would they continue to live in sin? Would they even know any better? Well, in one of his messages their pastor had taught them a concept that would come in handy for them. And they decided to believe it. They declined the offer by writing back and saying bluntly, “Sorry, we can’t come. We’re dead.” In the same way, you need to decide to believe you’re dead to sin. You must decline the offers of worldly people and your flesh.

Application: You must decide you do not have to give in to sin anymore—you must decide you are dead to sin. You must not give in to your flesh and go to drinking parties and get drunk. You must not commit immorality, live in sensuality, look at pornography, or think dirty thoughts. You teenagers are going to face invitations at school from so-called “friends” to attend parties with them on the weekend. You had better find out if people will be drinking. You had better not just show up and put yourself in the place of temptation for drunkenness and then possibly immorality. In what other situations will you face these lusts of flesh? You adults will probably be invited to parties or places of sensuality by coworkers or bosses or neighbors. All of you will be tempted to watch sensual TV shows, even on the major networks—we’re not just talking about cable programming! You don’t have to give in to your sinful desires. They have no control over you.

B. Decide you will not waste more time in sin (3-6).

1. Enough time has been wasted already (3).

Explanation: The time that passed when you lived for things unbelievers desire was long enough. Unbelievers desire sensualities, lusts, drunkennesses, revelries with immorality, drinking parties, and illicit idolatries—activities that occur multiple times in their lives.

Application: How long is long enough to live in sin? Your unsaved life gave you plenty of time for sin. Now you must decide to forsake your immorality, your late nights on the internet, your TV shows and



movies with sex and sexual innuendos, your drinking, and your dirty mind.

2. Rampant abuse may result (4).

Explanation: Your right living will surprise your unbelieving acquaintances. They expect you to go with them into debauchery as you always did, so don't be surprised if they slander you when you don't go along with them.

3. Ample judgment will follow (5).

Explanation: Every person who is alive today or has already died will give an account to God, including believers and unbelievers. God is ready to render judgment for you. Your slanderers will be brought to justice!

4. A sufficient reward awaits you (6).

Explanation: Believers who are now dead, but who heard the gospel during their lives died physically, but they are living spiritually forever. That is why the gospel was preached to them.

Application: Have you lost your sense of priority? Are physical pleasures what matter most to you? Ask yourself: "Do I deny myself pleasurable activities if they're sin?" If not, that must change today. You've already wasted enough of your life. You can change by God's grace as you realize you are dead to sin—it has no power over you—and begin living like it.

**Transition:** In addition to demanding that you think like Christ by believing you are dead to sin, the passage demands one more thing of you.

## II. Because you live for sinful desires and yourself too much, you must live for others (7-11).

- A. Exercise good sense and self-control (7).

Explanation: This is the second imperative of the passage.

1. The end is near (7).

Explanation: God is coming back and He will judge you—cf. v. 5. So why would you live foolishly in sinful pleasures not controlling your passions?



2. We need better prayer (7).

Explanation: plural—“prayers”

Application: Instead of giving yourself to immorality and drinking, get on your knees. Do something that will profit for eternity, not simply give you a buzz for a few hours.

- B. Eagerly love one another (8-9).

1. Love is preeminent (8).

Explanation: It is “before all.”

2. Forgiveness is needed (8).

Explanation: People have many faults. Love “hides” them.

Application: How do you respond to those idiosyncrasies of your wife? Do you scold her for them, or do you let your love “hide” them? What about when your kids unwittingly hurt your feelings?

3. Hospitality is required (9).

Explanation: plural—“hospitalities.” No grumbling is allowed.  
—Notice the similarities with the spiritual gifts of Romans 12.

Application: When was the last time you intentionally invited a fellow Christian needing lodging to stay with you? Two years ago? Does that need to change? God’s Word demands it does.

- C. Use spiritual gifts (10-11).

1. Serve (10-11).

Explanation: The same word is used in Romans 12:7. Serve in the strength God provides.

Illustration: It was the fall of my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. I had recently joined a soccer team for the first time in my life. And that Saturday was the big game of the year. We were to square off with our big challenger, the Pirates. And they were big, one boy in particular! He was easily nearly 8 inches taller than I was. He had me by 75-100 pounds, too. I was scared. I did not want to face the Pirates. I was scared of “the Pirate” and I was scared to lose. Serving my teammates was not my goal. My wellbeing was. Well the game progressed and I tried to



weasel my way off the field by saying I was hurt. My dad wisely realized what I was trying to do and forced me to stay on. “The Pirate” played defense for their big orange machine. Our smallest team member, John Kane, played offense. If you would have had the two of them stand beside each other, they would have fit the bill of David and Goliath. Little Kane scooted around “The Pirate” without fear. In fact, he scored one of the goals that helped lead us to the 3-2 victory. For his actions, my dad nicknamed him, “Courageous Kane.” He served his team, not himself. I thought it was all about me. You probably do, too, but it’s not. You, too, must stop living for yourself and begin serving other believers.

**Application:** You must serve other believers. Even though all of you do not have identical gifts, choose to serve others by putting their needs ahead of your own. You will be faced with the decision of whether or not to be hospitable and open your home to fellow church members on Sunday nights or some other day throughout the week. It will take time, effort, and sacrifice on your part. Will you serve other members of the body by inviting them over for a meal? Or will you serve yourself? Will you help out as an usher or a nursery worker? Will you help out with meals when ladies in our church have just given birth? Will you teenagers participate in the youth group service activities? You must serve one another.

## 2. Speak (11).

**Explanation:** Speak the sayings of God. If you have the ability to preach and teach, God expects you to use that gift.

**Illustration:** I can’t help but think of a friend of mine who was greatly used of God to reach many souls for the kingdom. He threw it all away to live in rampant immorality. Instead of serving others, he’s serving himself. Now we don’t even think he could be a believer. What a waste.

**Explanation:** Result: When we use our gifts to serve other believers, God is glorified in all things through Christ.

**Application:** How much does God’s glory mean to you?

**Conclusion:** Even though you often do what your flesh wants you to do, you can devote yourself to fulfilling God’s desires and sacrificing for other believers. The key is choosing to believe you are dead to sin and then living like it.

In the fall of 2004 my wife and I were returning home from being out. We pulled up to a stoplight. I looked at the car in the lane next to us. It sported a bumper sticker reading:



“Jesus Christ can change your life.” Good message—very true. One minor problem. As I looked at the driver, I noticed a cigarette in hand. Dead to sin? Maybe. Believing it and living it? No way!

You are doing the same thing. You may not be a smoker, but you don’t live as though you believe you’re dead to sin. The problem is not with Christ. He did His part by dying so you could be dead to sin. The difficulty lies with you.

You must decide to believe you are dead to sin. Give up lustful passions, lies, swearing, sensual living, and all your sin. Because you are dead to sin, you must live for God and others. Today is the day.



# Preaching the Word So People Will Listen: The Laws of Effective Spiritual Communication

## Introduction

- “Let your speech be always with *grace, seasoned with salt*, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

**Paul the Apostle**

*The Epistle to the Colossians, 4:6*

- “A sermon ineptly delivered arrives stillborn.”

**Haddon Robinson**

*Biblical Preaching, 191*

- “Our subject is one which I find scarcely ever noticed in any book upon homiletics—a very curious fact, for it is a most important matter and worthy of more than one chapter...That overlooked topic is how to obtain and retain the attention of our hearers. Their attention must be gained, or nothing can be done with them: and it must be retained, or we may go word-spinning, but no good will come of it.”

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

*Lectures to My Students, Vol. I, 136*

## I. The Law of Specificity: details are *riveting*; generalizations are boring.

\*Compelling Biblical reasons for this: (1) complexity of creation (2) Scripture complexity (3) complexity of the human.

A. Memorize and quote scripture.

1. The power of the short sword (see Ephesians 6:17).
2. Specific words do matter (see John 6:63).



- B. Leave less up to imagination.
1. The power of sequencing.
  2. The power of sense appeal language in description.
  3. The power of the first person account.
- C. Nail down the meaning specifically and succinctly.
1. Articulate the subtle grammatical nuances without being technical.
  2. Build on the color of the synonymy of the passage.
  3. Choose your facts carefully (be selective not exhaustive).
  4. Define in a pithy way, not always in a “dictionary” way.
- D. Pump blood into those illustrations.
1. Who did you say that was? (people)
  2. Where did you say that happened? (places)
  3. When did you say that occurred? (1987)
  4. How did they feel? (emotions)
  5. What are we supposed to learn and do? (make application)
- E. Talk about life.



*Four questions to ask about relevance:*



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1. Will someone need this information *today*?
2. Will someone need this information *this week*?
3. Will someone need this information *ever* to grow in grace and the knowledge of God?
4. Have I created a sense of need for this information *now*?

## II. The Laws of Spiritual Authority: say it with life; you're raising the dead.

\*A right theology of preaching mandates this: (1) divinely appointed position (2) Spirit-empowered (3) divinely inspired message.

A. Remember, they will come to watch you burn! Be fervent.

1. The element of intensity.
2. The element of certainty.
3. The element of eruption/emotion.
4. The element of compelling quietness.
5. The element of deafening silence.

B. Keep it flowing! Be fluent.

1. Speak in sentences.
2. Grow in your vocabulary.



3. Have plenty to say.
  4. Save your profundity for later.
- C. Add the spice! Be varied.
1. Volume: to yell or not to yell? That is really only part of the question. What about those whispering radio guys?
  2. Rate: no slo-mo, but remember you are not at Daytona either.
  3. Pitch: monotones, screechers, and humble-mumblers.
  4. Pause: the one that refreshes only, please.
  5. Position: the wooden Indians vs. the movers and the shakers?
  6. Action: make the action fit the thought (pointers, pounders, and choppers not allowed).
  7. Facial expression: a poker face on a *preacher*?
  8. Sermonic style: if you're an expository preacher you must believe in theology, right?
- D. Are they following you? Be clear.
1. Danger signs
    - a. Unfinished sermons.
    - b. Impromptu interjections.



- c. Disproportionate points.
  - d. Feedback on minor points.
  - e. Talking about your family and pastimes.
2. The laymen's descriptions of unclear, unfocused preaching.
- a. "He wanders all the time."
  - b. "Brother Bob gets off the point a lot."
  - c. "Preacher Jim loves to get on tangents."
  - d. "Pastor goes off on rabbit trails in about every sermon I've ever heard him preach."
  - e. "I love our pastor but I just can't follow him when he preaches."
  - f. "I got lost about half way through today. What were pastor's last couple of points today?"
3. Steps to renewed clarity.
- a. Step #1: unity
  - b. Step #2: order
  - c. Step #3: oral stress



d. Step #4: progress

Remember: “The success of a message depends on its being understood. If the message is not grasped, then all else is lost. Clarity has to be the beginning point and the most important point of style.”

John Broadus  
*On the Preparation and Delivery of  
Sermons, 210*



**III. The Law of credibility; who you are *draws* or *repels*, there is no way around it.**

\*Key Scripture Text: I Peter 5:3

A. How do you normally look and act?

1. Choose the words your teens would use to describe you.
  - a. cool/nerd-geek
  - b. nice/mean
  - c. caring/jerk
  - d. awesome/dweeb
  - e. interesting/boring
  
2. Choose the words your wife would say others use to describe you.
  - a. warm/cold
  - b. approachable/distant-detached
  - c. relaxed/stiff
  - d. natural/formal
  - e. appropriate/tactless



- f. normal/eccentric
- g. joyful/serious-morose
- h. tasteful/tasteless
- i. contemporary/dated
- j. conservative/fashionable
- k. positive/negative
- l. optimistic/pessimistic

B. What do they know you know?

- 1. The issue of positional credibility.
- 2. The issue of immediate credibility.
  - a. A reputation for preparation.
  - b. A conscience about thoroughness.
  - c. An orientation toward personal growth.
- 3. The issue of credentials.

C. What do they really think about your example?

- 1. Cultivate a confidant.



2. Keep a close watch on a short spiritual checklist.
  - a. domestically: as a family man
  - b. vocationally: as a pastor or evangelist
  - c. evangelistically: as a soul winner
  - d. practically: as a man living in the world
  - e. devotionally: as a man of God



# How to Avoid Offending God When You Preach: The Ethics of Biblical Preaching

## Introduction

- The study of Christian ethics is the study of the application of absolute truth to life situations.
- For the Christian, ethical behavior based on Scripture teaching is of primary importance.
- The Christian preacher may prepare and preach ethically or unethically.
- Satan's strategies demand that the Christian preacher examine ethical issues concerning preaching since the Devil would love nothing more than to have us preach sinfully!

### **I. The potential ethical conflict between church leadership responsibility and spiritual maturity.**

- A. The ethical tension created by the role of the preacher.
- B. The ethical tension created by the ideal of blamelessness.
- C. The ethical tension created by prior confession vs. public confession.
- D. The balance to be struck.

### **II. The challenge of the ethical borrowing of information.**

- A. Understanding the Biblical concept of originality
- B. Handling the issue of written vs. oral communication.



C. The issue of extent

1. Quotation

Key issues: phraseology, arrangement/sequencing, value of authority

2. Ideas from commentaries

Key issues: purpose, diversity, specificity

3. Illustrations

Key issues: factual vs. fictional, you vs. others, citing the source

4. Applications

Key issues: understood fraternity for sharing, some personal, diversity of source, consistent with the text

5. Outlines

Key issues: phraseology, arrangement, how much?

6. Sermons, in whole or in part

\*The Guiding Principle: “Let them that steal, steal no more;” “Honor to whom honor is due.”

**III. The ethical obligation of accuracy in preaching.**

A. Opinion vs. fact in non-revelational matters



- B. Choosing between varying interpretations of Scripture
- C. Thoroughness as essential to accuracy.
- D. The primary ethical issue: pragmatism in preaching.

**IV. The ethical use of persuasion in preaching.**

- A. Based on the nature of preaching
- B. Based on the nature of the recipient of preaching
- C. By keeping preaching from becoming coercive.
- D. By maintaining the primary theological tension in the act of preaching.



# **From First Century Meaning to Twenty-first Century Living: A Theology of Scripture Application for Preaching**

## **Introduction**

### **Some burning questions that need answering!**

- What emphasis does the Bible actually place on the application of truth to life?
- Is there really enough biblical material to warrant a theology of Scripture application?
- What commands does Scripture give concerning application in preaching?
- Does Scripture provide any restraints on the applications we make in preaching?
- At what point, if ever, do we just state the truth and let the listeners make the applications themselves?

## **I. Presuppositional “foundation stones” essential to the building of a right theology of application.**

### **A. A conservative, Spirit-dependent hermeneutic**

1. According to literary genre
2. According to normal linguistic sense
3. According to context
4. According to grammar
5. According to history and culture



6. According to varying dispensations
  7. According to Christo-centrism.
- B. An expository philosophy of the ministry of the Word.
1. Defined by delimitations: (a) not just a particular structure of sermon; (b) not just biblically correct; (c) not a narrowly exclusive approach to books of the Bible, which preaches only chapter by chapter, verse by verse in canonical and textual sequence; (d) not an approach dominated exclusively by the explanation of the meaning of Biblical text.
  2. Defined denotatively: A firm confidence in—
    - the original inerrancy of Scripture.
    - the present accuracy of Scripture.
    - the attainable clarity of Scripture.
    - the complete sufficiency of Scripture.
    - the immediate applicability of Scripture.
  3. Defined connotatively: a firm commitment to—
    - the priority of Scripture meaning as necessary to all else that follows in the ministry of the Word.
    - a carefully applied conservative hermeneutic in the study of Scripture vs. assumed meaning, educated guessing, imposed theological paradigms, and human creativity-imagination-novelty in explaining the meaning of Scripture.



- maintaining a conscience about thoroughness, so that no detail is viewed as insignificant to explicating a text of Scripture.
- a necessarily selective, but systematic and well arranged approach to the preaching and teaching of the Word (Acts 20:27-28; I Corinthians 4:1-2).

Observation: These two factors are vital to arriving at an accurate meaning of Scripture, which always precedes correct biblical application.

C. An understanding of the primacy of the life-application of the Word for the believer, as presented in the Scriptures.

1. From a lexical perspective—what a summary definition of biblical applicatory *terms* suggests.

- Biblical application is showing how the truth of Scripture works in daily life, on both the internal level (i.e. thought, disposition, choices, character) and the external level (general behavior, relationships, service).

2. From a biblical-theological perspective—what major Scripture *concepts* imply.

- *Obedience*—implies explicit response in daily life to a particular command of God in Scripture (“ye have obeyed from the heart the doctrine,” Romans 6:17).
- *Faith*—implies trust in daily life in a particular promise of God or in some facet of the revealed character of God in Scripture (“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,” Romans 10:17).



- *Holiness*—implies the pursuit of purity or consecration in daily life based on what is revealed in Scripture (“sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth,” John 17:17).
- *Grace*—implies dependence on divine empowerment through Scripture itself [and other means revealed in the Scriptures] for salvation, sanctification, suffering, and service (“My grace is sufficient for thee,” II Corinthians 12:9; see also Acts 20:32, “the word of grace”).
- *Love*—implies generous self-sacrifice for the good of others and the glory of God in daily life as the fulfillment of the two greatest commandments in Scripture, which are the summation of all the other commandments (Matt. 22:36-38).

Conclusion: “Putting the truth to work” in life is the capstone purpose of the Word of God in personal sanctification, is central to a Scriptural bibliology, and is essential to the true expression of Christianity in the world.

3. From a propositional perspective—what explicit Scripture *statements* say.

- Application of the Word to daily life shown by obedience, which is better than sacrifice—I Samuel 15:22

*“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”*

- Application of the Word to daily life by taking action is the essence of biblical wisdom—Matt. 7:24

*“Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth** them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”*



- Application of the Word to daily life is the secret to spiritual change and blessing vs. self-deception, which comes from Scripture knowledge alone without application—James 1:22, 25.

*“But be ye **doers** of the word, and **not hearers only**, deceiving your own selves...but a **doer** of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*

*“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:1-4).  
“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:23-25).*

God’s purpose for Scripture is its implementation in the believer’s life. Our ministry in general, and our preaching in particular should aid the saints to that end by helping them see how they should respond to the Word of God in their thinking and in their living.

D. A right and realistic view of the world (**ko,smoj**) as described in Scripture.

1. The “world” understood as an antithesis.

- The world is the antithesis of the kingdom of God. It is a philosophical view and finds expression through human culture, which denies the authority of God, is ruled over by Satan, and is often manifested as humanism (a man-centered worldview). It stands in opposition to the kingdom of God ruled over by Christ. It is the environment in which the Christian is called upon to serve and is one of the three chief antagonists to godly living (i.e., the world, the flesh, and the devil).



2. The “world” understood through analogy.

- A crushing mold, as suggested in Romans 12:1-2.

*“be not conformed to this world”*

- An addictive pleasure, as suggested in I John 2:15-17.

*“love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”*



- A fiendish dominion, as suggested in Ephesians 6:12.

*“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

### 3. The “world” understood multi-dimensionally.

- As a philosophical phenomenon—a world view.
- As a personal phenomenon—an object of desire.
- As a moral phenomenon—an expression of self-centeredness.
- As a fluctual phenomenon—a pervasive atmosphere.
- As a theological phenomenon—a concept clearly revealed and warned against in Scripture.

**Why is understanding the world so crucial to the application of Scripture to life?** The clear, unequivocal expression of the Christ-life is only possible when it is distinguishable from the world-life. The degree to which his light is darkened his impact is compromised. Holiness is not only purity as separate from impurity, but the eternal as separate from the temporal, the spiritual as separate from the mundane, and the heavenly as separate from the earthly. The worldling is impure, temporal, mundane, and earth-focused. The ideal believer is pure, eternal, spiritual, and heaven-focused.

## II. An exploration of Doriani’s theories of application in relation to interpretation.



A relatively new and groundbreaking work on the subject of Scripture application has been written by Daniel Doriani entitled *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (P&R Publishing, 2001), 342 pp. This is a significant advance on the seminal ideas of Jay Adams presented in his *Truth Applied* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1990; now out-of-print), 140pp.

A. The traditional view

- The exposition of a text of Scripture resulting in first century meaning (interpretation) precedes and is completely distinct from the twenty-first century relevance of that text to the believer's life today (see *Doriani*, 18-19).

B. A counterproposal

- The true meaning of a text is the application of it; that is, the text isn't really understood until it is applied. Is the meaning of "Thou shalt not steal" *really* understood if someone duplicates copyrighted information without permission, pads their expense account, lies on their income tax, and then says they have obeyed the command because they "have never taken anything from anybody?" This theory is proposed by John Frame in his work *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* and seems strongest when used with reference to law-texts, i.e. explicit commands (see *Doriani*, pp. 20-21).

C. A synthesis

- First-century meaning and twenty-first century application are distinct in principle, based theologically on our doctrine of inspiration. But the line between them is permeable, based theologically on our doctrine of sanctification. It is the stated purpose of God for the former (meaning) to result in the latter (application), the latter carrying with it the full authority of the inspired revelation of God in the individual believer's life. If the believer fails to respond to the application of Scripture, he is disobedient. For him, the application *is* a command of God (see *Doriani*, 22-39).

**III. The centrality of application to the proclamation of the Word—the importance of II Timothy 4:2 to the discussion.**



A. The syntax emphasizes that the foundation of all applicatory activity that follows in this statement is based on the clear meaning of Scripture, which is to be presented with urgency and authority: “preach the Word.”

1. Reason One: The object of the verb **khvruxon** is the Word, which is the written revelation of God.
2. Reason Two: The verb **kh,ruxon**, which means proclaim with authority, is the first of five aorist imperatives in this sentence and is developed by the other four that follow. A standard use of the aorist imperative is to give an urgent, forceful emphasis to the actions encouraged.

B. Three of the four modifying verbs which follow the first are applicatory words: “reprove, rebuke exhort.”

1. Reprove (**ev,le,gxon**) means conviction of sin and, hopefully, repentance from it.
2. Rebuke (**evpiti,mhson**), a synonym for reprove, means to place blame for sin.
3. Exhort (**paraka,leson**) means to comfort or encourage.

(See R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, for a concise and helpful discussion of these terms.)

C. The final modifying phrase sets an applicatory tone for the whole act of preaching: “with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

1. Longsuffering (**makroqum,a**) in this context means patient endurance toward the unresponsiveness and disobedience of the people of God to the preaching of the Word, accompanied by a hope for positive change.



2. Doctrine (**didach/**) in this context means teaching in an effort to correct the ignorance and consequent lack of obedience by believers.

#### IV. Elements of the heart that enhance a man's capacity for effective application in preaching.

##### A. The illumination of the mind

- Definitive text: I Corinthians 2:9-10

*“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

The Spirit grants the capacity to go beyond a simplistic surface understanding of Scripture to the “deep things of God” (**ba,qh**). Any researcher can gain surface knowledge of the Bible; but only a Spirit-illuminated believer penetrates beneath the surface to observe the details of truth within a passage, the intricate relationships of Scripture with Scripture along with the inferences drawn therefrom, and the detailed manner in which Scripture intersects life.

##### B. The development of spiritual maturity

- Hebrews 5:13-14

*“For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”*

The very essence of spiritual maturity is the taking in of the details of God's revelation (the meat of the Word) and making intense effort to discern how (the exercising of the senses) its truths identify the rightness or sinfulness of one's thoughts and behavior.

##### C. The maintenance of a pure conscience

- Definitive texts: Romans 9:1-2 and Acts 24:16



*“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” (Romans 9:1-2).*

*“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).*

Of the standard Greek lexicons, Thayer offers a definition most reflective of how the New Testament informs us concerning the Christian nuances of the term **sunei,dhsij** (conscience) in its 30 occurrences. Conscience, he says is “the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 602).

Empowered by the Spirit of God, conscience is the capacity of the regenerate heart which enables the believer to evaluate both his future and past acts and pass moral judgment on them, resulting in either guilt or wholesome self-commendation. Only a man with the highest standard of conscience (“a conscience void of offense toward God and men”) is in a position to fully grasp the importance of this to a right relationship with God, though no man’s conscience is infallible or the absolute standard of right and wrong for another believer. In matters not spoken to explicitly in Scripture, the only final guiding authority for a man for thought and action is his own conscience, educated by the Word of God and illumined by the Spirit of God.

In the development of his own conscience, no wise man ever ignores the corporate conscience of the body of Christ or his own local assembly in deciding a course of action for himself in life.

A man of God should freely preach his conscience as the view to which God has brought him in his walk with Christ, but with a deferential spirit and a careful tone. Remember, we are to “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). This is a crucial principle for the use of application in preaching.

#### D. A spirit of gentleness



- Definitive text: II Timothy 2:24-26

*“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”*

“Must not strive,” “be gentle,” “apt to teach,” “patient,” and “in meekness” are words and phrases which each speak of the manner of a man of God in the ministry of the Word. The servant of the Lord must seek to rescue men and women from the evil one. Rather than harshly, suddenly, and forcefully attacking those who are in spiritual bondage, the man of God seeks to draw men and women to their senses spiritually by his love as well as his teaching.



#### IV. The use of application in preaching.

##### A. Understand the different levels of application in preaching.

###### 1. The intuitive level

- Accomplished by the right choice of sermonic propositions, especially ideas that are obviously relevant to a particular audience from Scripture.
- Examples: Speaking to an audience of production plant workers from Ephesians 6 about a right response to the authority of an employer; or speaking to students on the will of God or appropriate relationships with those of the opposite gender; or speaking to husbands at a men's retreat about how to love their wives.

###### 2. The exhortive level

- Accomplished by the direct urging of a response to Scripture, especially using the very words of Scripture.
- Examples: From Ephesians 4. "Put on the new man," "Let him that stole steal no more," "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," and "Be ye kind."

###### 3. The demonstrative level

- Accomplished by the use of specific, human interest illustrations, especially from Scripture.
- Examples: Nathan's parable about the slaughter of the pet lamb to David, bringing conviction of his sins of adultery and murder of which he had not truly repented; or, the death of Ananias and Sapphira because of their spiritual hypocrisy and lying.



- B. Make it the pervasive atmosphere of your preaching.
1. By formulation of an applicatory proposition for the message.
    - Example: “Truths about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit” vs. “You must respond to the person and work of the Holy Spirit in your heart.”
  2. By incorporation of application under each major sermonic division
    - Example: label use, i.e. “App:” and use of the litmus test of definition.
  3. By use of applicatory language throughout the message
    - Examples: first and second person pronouns, verbs of obligation, and temporal modifiers
  4. By demonstrating an urgent spirit throughout the message about response.
    - Examples: increased verbal rate, fixed eye contact, and strategic pause
  5. By strong appeal for change at the conclusion of the message
    - Examples: Use of life-change terminology such as decide, resolve, purpose, determine, commit, confirm, affirm, repent, turn, step out, step up, move into, nail down, promise, dedicate, and consecrate.

## Summary and Conclusions

- Scripture is not silent on the importance of the application of truth to the believer’s life generally.



- Scripture is not silent on the importance of application in preaching specifically.
- Scripture presents its commands, examples, and descriptions of God and His ways to elicit a response from mankind, not simply to be known factually.
- God has always intended His word to be transformational. The Divine intent for theology is its application to life. **It is to be truth applied, never just truth alone.**



# Preaching in the First Person: The Stewardship of Personality for Proclaiming the Truth

## Part 1

### Introduction

Please look thoughtfully at the title of this presentation. I intend for it to be about preaching and a particular dimension of it. I think we should start out by asking and answering some pivotal questions that will set us on the path of right thinking about preaching and specifically *the place of human personality, your personality in it.*

- Does classic homiletical theory account for this element in preaching as *seminal* (i.e., a critical beginning point, basic, fundamental) to a right understanding of it?
- Is God’s use of human personality in preaching *unique as a means* of the advancement of the Truth?
- Should preaching be seen as solely dependent on the will and power of God by the preacher, or viewed more *synergistically*?
- What *dimensions of a man’s preaching* will be impacted by a right view of human personality in it?

### I. The essential spiritual elements of preaching in the first person.

- To preach in the first person is to be able to say “I” am fully engaged, fully consumed, fully given to this task—both in preparation and performance, and that is obvious to all who know and hear me.”
- These essential spiritual elements constitute the vital organs and life-blood for sustaining the “body,” which is first person preaching—here we have the “brain,” the “blood,” and the “heart” of the matter.



A. The cultivation of prioritized dependence.

1. Declared as right philosophy.

- Nowhere is this more powerfully expressed than in I Corinthians 2:4-5,

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

2. Explained by providing contrasts.

- Note the important context of these remarks in I Corinthians 2:1-5.

No dependence on sophistry (2:1).

No dependence on philosophy (2:1).

Dependence on Christ alone (2:2).

No dependence on self (2:3).

Dependence on the Spirit’s power (2:4-5).

B. The pursuit of rigorous purity.

1. Necessary to boldness in preaching.

- Preaching which is boldly confrontational comes from the heart of a man that boldly and unsparingly confronts himself about his sins against God and men.

2. Rooted in a right view of conscience.



- This was Paul’s testimony in Acts 24:16 when facing powerful rulers and possible continued imprisonment.

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men.”

The authority of his conscience.  
The extremity of his effort.  
The totality of his intention.

### C. The maintenance of long-term credibility.

1. The connection with preaching cited. Peter captures this thought in I Peter 5:2-3 by the arresting sequence of his thoughts:

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”

2. The essence of spiritual leadership established.

- The essence of spiritual leadership is example-setting. Words and life must match, or the words carry little weight; they lack credibility.

Summary: Every sermon should be a careful exposition of the Scriptures, *and* the fruit of an illumined and obedient life—this is preaching in the first person, made possible when the essential spiritual elements are in place.

## Part 2

### II. The vital demonstrative practices for preaching in the first person.

#### A. Complete emotional authenticity.



1. The lack of it is extremely problematic.

- When I was a young preacher, shortly after Noah’s flood, I was preaching a series of services with a pastor for a week at a Christian school in Nashville, TN which served as annual revival services. The man preached before I did several times, and I witnessed a first in my experience—he told a horribly wrenching personal story about the death of a child, seemed to shed genuine tears, followed immediately by a humorous anecdote that made everyone laugh—all in the same 10 minutes of the sermon. I was immediately stunned and disturbed. There was an incongruity, a shallowness, a lack of emotional authenticity that was terribly revealing about that man’s character, at least in that instance.

2. The apostolic example of it is compelling.

- Spirit-prompted tears are intended by God to be a divine lubricant for the insertion of truth into the souls of men—they arrest attention and reveal a genuineness of concern few other things can. However, tear-jerking stories must never be employed for immediate effect and response.
- Paul modeled this and reminded the Ephesians of it in Acts 20:31—continual, spontaneous, and uncontrived emotion characterized his preaching ministry to them.

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

B. Discreet personal transparency.

1. The potential for a mistake in it.



- Once while traveling back to Greenville late one Sunday night from preaching, I was listening to the delayed broadcast of the Sunday evening service of a church and veteran pastor I know. I heard a painful confession by him of his complete failure over his entire ministry in intercessory prayer for his flock as an introduction to a message on the subject. I was shocked, embarrassed for him, and thrust into consideration of the wisdom of what he had done. His conscience was clearly burdened, but his failure was a private one, not public. This may seem an odd way for me to encourage transparency—I am actually supporting it, when coupled with discretion.
2. The apostolic practice of it.
- In his testimony recorded more than once in Acts and his epistles, Paul admits to being party to the imprisonment and murder of other Christians, albeit before his conversion—that is some very serious transparency.
  - The melding of humility and honesty that brings a public admission of failure, repentance from it, can bring a powerful spiritual effect not soon forgotten.
3. The undeniable power of it
- When I was an associate pastor early in my first ministry, it fell to me to lead in the discipline and restoration of my senior pastor, who had fallen into immorality with the wife of the principal of the Christian school. These were difficult times, but I’m sure I’ve never been nearer heaven than when I preached for forgiveness to the congregation that day, heard him read his letter of confession, beg for forgiveness from God and his flock. We all wept, I saw the sheep weep and gather as one around him in an attempt to encourage him.
  - Compelled of God, I have practiced this personal transparency myself from time to time in preaching and seen the door of ministry to broken hearts fly open like never before. This is “preaching in the first person” when



we say “I have struggled, I have failed, I have repented, I have recovered, and I hope you will too.” Have you ever gone forward at one of your own invitations, or at that of a visiting preacher in your church? Remember, the essence of spiritual leadership is example setting and this is a good example to set from time to time, when you are so led of God. Most often, your struggles will be on a different level than your flock, but to demonstrate your responsiveness to God is a good thing, not a harmful thing.



C. Selected experiential connectivity.

1. Brings a vicarious response.

- There is profound power in true-to-life examples to stimulate a vicarious spiritual response in your hearers.
- When Nathan appeared before David in II Samuel 12 and told him the story of the rich man who stole and slaughtered a poor man's pet lamb, he was completely disarmed spiritually.
- This is preaching in the first person in the sense of getting the listener to see himself in what you are saying, and is often the case when your experience or what you describe parallels the experience of your hearers.

2. Rises out of a correct stewardship of experience.

- All suffering, all tragedy, and all divine deliverance is a stewardship from God for a preacher. His firsthand observation or experience gives a weight to what he says which is achieved no other way.
- Saw this profoundly demonstrated by Bobby and Sarah McCoy, who was injured in an automobile accident while in graduate school when he spoke, then she spoke in the chapel service at Bob Jones University.

D. Constant fervent urgency.

1. Part of the Pauline pattern.



- There is a pattern in Paul’s preaching ministry in this regard described in Scripture. Speaking of Christ, Paul wrote in Colossians 1:28-29:

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

- To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 2:9 and 3:10,

“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (2:9).

“Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.” (3:10)

- In contrast to being “laid back,” fervent urgency communicates, “This matters to *me* in a major way, all of the time.” The apostle understood and practiced this; both what he said and the way he said it mattered.

## 2. Part of the legacy of the history of preaching.

- Characteristic of the preaching of Brainerd, Edwards, Taylor, Whitfield, and Spurgeon.
- Part of the legend that has grown up around John Wesley was an encounter with a young preacher who asked him his secret to attracting so many to listen to his preaching, to which he is to have wisely responded, “They do not come to listen to me preach. They come to watch me burn.”



Summary: A man profoundly impacted by the Word in his daily experience and his preparation for preaching will demonstrate that reality in the way he preaches, in both sermonic content and delivery. Firsthand contact with Christ makes preaching in the first person virtually inevitable.



### III. The glorious outcomes of preaching in the first person.

A. You demonstrate the operation of the grace of God in your life before your hearers.

1. As a fulfillment of a divine promise.

- This proves a great promise of God before the world and the church, as stated in II Corinthians 9:8.

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

2. As an example of first century power.

- You become a 21<sup>st</sup> century example of what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:10.

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

B. Your ministry in the Word is delivered from passionless artificiality into dynamic spiritual reality.

1. Freed from professionalism.

- Dispassionate professionalism and academic pedantry evaporates in the bright light and heat of Spirit-empowered ministry.



2. Freed to demonstrate spiritual authority.

- You flesh out in reality the mandate to preach with authority, as taught in II Timothy 4:2—a derived authority from God and an authority of “first person” experience.
- In a lesser sense, you model Christ to your hearers, “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29)

C. You are a catalyst for transformation of heart in your hearers.

- Their minds are informed. Their emotions answer to the working of God in their behalf. Their consciences are sensitized, convicted, and cleansed. Their wills are rendered willing “to do his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13) through the proclamation of the Word.

### Summary and Conclusions

- These are the essential spiritual elements, the vital demonstrative practices, and the glorious outcomes of preaching in “the first person.”
- In fact, the only *real*, biblical preaching is preaching that rises out of the heart and life of a man who daily walks with his Master.
- This man alone can say to his hearers, “I know Him, I love Him, I worship Him, and I adore Him . . . and so should you.”

