

How To Make a Bible Message

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As men of God we want to be sure that we can both understand and teach the word of God. This booklet gives some ideas, suggestions, and guidance when it comes to preparing classes and lessons to share with the church family.

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This Booklet Belongs to

How To Make a Bible Message

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GENERAL INTRODUCTON

Before you share anything you must decide to be a learner. Until you have learned there will be nothing to teach. John Piper says, "Come to the Bible with a sense of expectation and openness that here you might find something vastly more wise and more penetrating and more world-shaping than any of the contemporary ideas you are presently dealing with." What we offer every sermon or class is how the Word of God teaches us to become more like Christ.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CLASS AND A SERMON?

Class	Sermon
Message is flexible	Message is fixed
Students are more active	Preacher is active
Teachers will be passive at times	Congregation usually passive
Students share questions	Preacher predicts questions

TEACHING TIP: 15/15/70 SUGGESTION

15% of your time asking and listening to questions. At least 3 questions with three answers. (students doing something and teacher listening or waiting).

15% of your time in illustrations, activities, and participation (students doing something and teachers listening or waiting).

70% of your time teaching (teacher doing something and students listening or waiting).

EXPLORING: JESUS – THE MASTER TEACHER

Matthew 10:25-37

What different ways did Jesus use to teach the man?

Who is my neighbor? How could Jesus have answered that question? How did Jesus answer that question? What was the only instruction Jesus gave the man?

Matthew 13

What way did Jesus teach in this passage?

TEACHER FOCUSED VERSUS STUDENT FOCUSED

What is the goal of a Bible class? That you will teach or that people will learn?

What if I don't get through all my teaching notes? With teaching less might just be more.

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COMMON TEACHING FEARS

What if someone asks me a question and I don't know the answer?

With a sermon some people feel more comfortable because they know that people probably won't stop them to ask a question, but a class is different. People probably will ask questions.

1. **The teacher is not expected to know everything.** It is alright to say, "great question. Honestly, I'm not sure I have the answer for you today, but I will study it and give an answer next week." The first time someone asks you a question you do not know that is fine. However, challenge yourself to know the answer if that question is asked in the future.
2. When people ask a question you can **turn the question back to either the class or the original one** who asked the question. Say something like, "does anyone in the class have any thoughts on that question?" Ask the person who asked the question, "what do you think the answer is?"
3. Don't be afraid to say, "**give me a few moments to think about that.** I'll try and answer that later in the class.

FOCUS AND FUNCTION:

FOCUS:

The main point you want to teach. The center of your message.

Answers the question: what is my message about?

1. The focus should not be more than one sentence. Keep it short.
2. The focus should use very small words
3. The more clear, fixed, exact, specific the better.
4. The focus should be a statement not a question.

For Example, in Luke 15:11-32. The focus line could be:

God loves his lost children so much.

The only hope for a sinner is to return to God.

Sin destroys all we have.

God is full of love.

Once we have decided on a focus line, everything in our lessons should be about the same think. We know if is a good function if I ask you "what was your Bible message about" and you say, "God loves his lost children so much". Then I ask a church member what was the Bible message about and they say "God loves his lost children so much."

If someone does not know our focus it usually means we talked about to many things and they got confused.

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FUNCTION:

People find it easier to listen to a lesson if it has something to do with their everyday life. Learning that does not impact our spiritual life is of little value. We must be sure that our lesson answers the question – what does this have to do with me?

The purpose of your message. What you want people to do after they hear this message.

Answers the questions: what do you want people to do after they hear this Bible message?

To guide, encourage, teach, comfort, cause repentance, stand firm, remind, change, know.

For example, in Luke 15:11-32. The function of a sermon could be:

To encourage sinful members to repent.
God forgives.

To take away our shame because we know

To give us strength to leave our life in the world.

To challenge us to change our lifestyle.

To know God's promise to accept truly repentant sinners.

PRACTICE

Look at the five Bible passages below and decide on a good focus and function line.

Phil 3:12-14

2 Tim. 4:1-2

Deut. 8:17-20

Genesis 3:1-12

Psalm 1:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

In your introduction you can do several things:

1. Tell the congregation what you are going to tell them.
2. Get their attention
3. Encourage them to listen
4. Challenge them

In the introduction you need to give the listeners an idea about where you are going with the sermon and what benefit it will be to their lives if they listen. During the introduction you can give your focus statement and even your function statement.

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IDEAS FOR AN INTRODUCTION (FROM PAUL SCOTT WILSON)

1. Tell a story using an opposite of what your Bible message will be about
 - a. The story about a man who's son ran away and then the son came home, but the father told the boy he had already had his chance so he should leave and go and find another place to live.
2. Start with a story that people understand from their own lives
 - a. I knew a man who had a son who disobeyed him and left him. The son was gone many years. He hurt the family very much while he was gone. But then one day he came back to the village and asked to speak to the father so he could offer an apology. How would you feel if this was you?
3. Start with the Bible reading
 - a. As I read this passage this morning I want you to think about what it would be like to be the Father in this story. Read the passage.
4. Start with a history item.
5. Start with an item that people are talking about in the village.
6. Start with a made up story.

CONCLUSION:

Every Bible lessons should have a conclusion. This is where you end the message in a good way that people will remember. This is not a time to share new parts of the message.

In your conclusion you can do several things:

1. Give a small summary of your main points
2. Ask questions that make the people think
3. Challenge a new way of living
4. Leave the listeners with a story that helps explain the function of the sermon.

TEACHING THE BIBLE'S MEANING FOR US TODAY (APPLICATION)

Application means to give something a useful meaning, to teach how to do what is being said. Application answers the question: what does the Bible passage mean to me today?

Numbers 14:20-23 – God tells his people because they have complained to God and argued against him they will not enter his promised land. Many years later in Psalms 95:7-11 the writer wrote: “Today if you hear my voice do not harden your hearts. He said that because of the way people acted God would not welcome them to his rest.”

In Hebrews 4:1 it say the promised rest is still open so Today we must not harden our hearts.

Then Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Today – this is always a changing day. Today is not a Monday. It is not a Tuesday. The time when you read today is today.

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I saw a sign one time in kai bar and it said “Free Food Tomorrow”. Tomorrow never comes it is always a day in the future. Today is always here. It is always this exact moment.

What this passage is teaching us is that promises God made in the past are still promises for us today. We today can choose between God’s eternal rest (heaven) or punishment. We learn from this passage that God’s Word meant something yesterday, it means something today, and it will mean something tomorrow.

When we bring a Bible message it is important to teach all three parts: (1) what the Word meant (from before times) (2) what the Word means for us today (3) what the Word will mean for us in the future times.

The way of deciding what the Word means for us now is called application. Every Bible message should have application because God’s word is not just history. It is living and active.

For us to apply a Bible message we must first think about the people who we will be speaking to.

For example:

1. If we are speaking only to older people should we speak about
 - a. Sins and temptations every young person has
 - b. How we can live for God when we are older
2. If we are speaking only to all married people should we speak about
 - a. The ways Satan will tempt singles
 - b. God’s teachings on how to love your marriage partner
3. If we are speaking to a group all of baptized people
 - a. Why you need to be baptized for salvation
 - b. How we live a faithful life for Christ.

Usually when we speak to a group of people they will not all be the same (i.e. not all old, not all married, not all baptized). So our Bible message we should be sure has an example or a way that the message can mean something or be an encouragement to as many people as possible. For example, if you are speaking about salvation you could spend some of your time talking about the importance of giving your life to God in baptism, but also spend some time talking about how the Holy Spirit will lead us and guide us for living a good life.

QUESTIONS TO HELP APPLY YOUR MESSAGE:

- How does the passage apply to my life?
- What is God asking us to change because of this passage?
- What does it teach me to believe? To do? To become?
- What does this passage teach us to do, say, think, or stop doing, saying, or thinking?
- Is there an example to follow? A sin to confess? A command to obey? A promise to believe? An new way to think? An action to take?
- What emotions are changed by this passage?
- Have there been any things happening in the village that reminds me of this topic?
- Are there things that we are usually taught is right in our villages that this passage says is not right?
- What eternal teachings are there that can bring encouragement to my life?

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- How can I put this passage into practice today?
- How should this passage change the way we live tomorrow?
- How have I seen that the message of this passage is true from my own life?

LET'S PRACTICE:

Find an application of the following passages:

Matthew 6:19-24 –

John 15:5-8 –

Acts 2:36-41 –

Gal. 6:1-5 –

SUGGESTED TOPICS AND PASSAGES:

The creation	Shortness of life on earth	The Holy Spirit	Baptism
The fall of man	Sin: why we sin, what it destroys, how God treats it, how we can overcome	The Bible is God's Word	Lord's Supper
How do we come to know God?	Satan	Repentance, Faith, Conversion	Church Leadership
The one God	Jesus' – sinless, example, death resurrection,	The church – body of Christ, Nation of God, Temple of the Spirit	Death
Jesus' Lordship	Kingdom of God	Worship – the focus of worship, the meaning of worship	The Christian Hope
The Spirit's Presence	How Jesus' death saves us	Prayer in the church	Judgment
Jesus is Divine	How we are made one with God	Evangelism	Heaven / Hell
God is holy, powerful, jealous, loving, just, compassionating, judgmental, ...			
Eternal life			

Of Course we can also choose lessons where we don't start with an idea or topic, but find a Bible message and then preach what the Bible teaches us. Some call this textual or exegetical preaching.

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We need to be sure that we are choosing different passages when we preach. Sometimes we have a certain number of Bible verses we usually like to preach from.

For example, when we want to show that God loves the world we always think of John 3:16 and read that passage. When we want to teach about baptism we always think of Acts 2:38. When we want to talk about love we always think of 1 Cor. 13. But we need to be sure we are using many different passages from all throughout the Bible to be sure we are bringing messages from all parts in the Bible.

HOW CAN I FIND NEW PASSAGES TO PREACH FROM?

- Be sure you are doing your own regular Bible reading, not just reading to find a passage to teach about. When you see an interesting verse you might like to preach about either underline it in your Bible or write the reference on a piece of paper.
- Take time to read the main titles before sections of the Bible. As you read these titles it will remind you of what the section is about.
- Ask people in the church what Bible passages are especially encouraging to them. As they share you might get some new ideas.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR SERMON / TEACHING

Examples come from the story of the Lost Son from Luke 15:11-32

1. Story
Choose a Bible story and before reading (or instead of reading the passage) tell the story. Then you can tell a story about how our lives are like the story you just told.
2. Saying lots of smaller things about one larger point
 - a. This morning I want to teach about what Luke 15:11-32 teaches us about God's love. First, God's love is patient. Second, God's love is forgiving. Third, God's love is generous.
3. Comparing two ways:
 - a. This morning I want to talk about two different ways we can react to a lost person who comes home. We can treat him like the older brother. He was angry and did not want to accept his brother. We can also treat him like the father. He was full of joy, grace, and love. The right way for us is to act like the father.
4. Reading small parts of a passage then explain that part. Then we read some more and explain that part.
 - a. Read Luke 15:13-16 – then say ... The younger son lived a life that was not pleasing to the father. Sometimes we also live lives that are not pleasing to our father.
 - b. Read Luke 15:17-20a – then say ... The younger son decide it was time to go back to the father. When we lived against God we must also go back to the father.
 - c. Read Luke 15:20b-24 – then say ... The father had grace on the son and welcomed him back home. When we return to God in forgiveness we can also be welcomed back by our father.

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- d. Read Luke 15:25-30 – then say ... The older brother could not be happy for his brother who returned. Sometimes we also have a hard time welcoming back people who have been lost.
- e. Read Luke 15:31-32 – then say ... The father taught the brother that we should be happy when a lost brother come home. We should also tell lost brothers to come home and also give them love when the return to God.
5. Use some questions to help your message
 - a. What caused the problem in the passage?
 - i. The son left the father
 - b. How was the problem solved?
 - i. The son realized he had sinned against the father and the father welcomed him back home.
 - c. What does this teach us about the ways of man?
 - i. Our earthly bodies will be tempted by the ways of this world.
 - d. What does that teach us about God?
 - i. God is happy to accept lost children back into his house.
6. Three Points about the Passage
 - a. First, we learn that we need to repent. Second, we know that we must confess our wrong. Third, we know God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins.
7. What Happened and what that action brought (Cause and Effect)
 - a. What happened was that this younger son gave into sin and temptation. This sin destroyed the young mans life. It lead him away from God. It left him hurting and without hope. Today if we give into sin it will also destroy our lives, lead us away from God, and leave us hurting. But, the next thing that happened was that the son repented and saw the wrong he did. This repentance brought forgiveness, a better life, and hope. When we repent we can expect forgiveness and hope, and God may even bless us with a better life.
8. Give a right teaching or prove a point lesson
 - a. Today some people say that God does not forgive sins. But if we look at these passages we see (1) God ran to the son (2) God gave his son a place of honor (3) God loves his son.
9. Normal sermon outline
 - a. Introduction, what the Bible verse is saying (explanation), what that means for us today (application), an illustration, a conclusion. This can be in the same or different order.
10. Tell the story the way one of the people in the story might think about it (Viewpoint)
 - a. From the younger sons side – Talk about how he didn't think that he could go home. He had done all this wrong. How sad he must have felt for his choice his shame.
 - b. From the fathers side – Talk about how he waited. Had trouble sleeping. Prayed for his son. The joy he felt when he saw the son come home.
 - c. From the older brothers side – Talk about how he felt so much better than his brother. He was perfect and never made any mistakes. How it was so hard for him to offer forgiveness to the brother who had done these wrong things.
11. In the Bible times ... And in our times ...
 - a. In the Bible times people rejected God and in our times people reject God. Look at this passage in Luke 15. In the Bible times when someone returned

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with repentance he was forgiven. Today when we return with repentance we are forgiven.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOURSELF AFTER THE BIBLE LESSON IS FINISHED:

- Does the way I plan to say things bring God glory or myself glory?
 - When you use good examples are you always the example?
- Are my words simple enough for everyone to understand?
- Is the message clear and easy to remember?
- What will I do if I begin to feel scared before I share my words?

HOW TO PUT YOUR BIBLE MESSAGE TOGETHER

1. Choose your Bible passage or topic
2. Read the passage
3. Be sure that you are covering enough but not too much information with your passage
4. Study the passage
5. State the sermon focus and function
6. Decide what type of a sermon style you want to use
7. Put the information together in a way that fits with the focus and function
8. Write your introduction and conclusion
9. Write out your sermon and spend time praying over your sermon.

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HOW I MAKE MY BIBLE LESSONS

THREE HOURS IN A WEEK PLAN

PART ONE: ONE HOUR

1. Pray for God's wisdom and direction
2. Decide if you want to do textual (choose some Bible verses) or topical sermon (choose a Bible idea)
3. Decide on topic or text

IF TOPIC	IF TEXT
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find as many passages about topic. (Be sure to read the verses around each passage)2. Decide which are the most important to be included in the sermon3. Choose one text to be your key text4. Follow the 'if text list' (to the right), then come back to this list5. Ask yourself does the key verse still mean what I thought it meant. Do the other verses still mean the same thing? If yes you have finished this step. If 'no' your might want to choose a different key verse and not use this one.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the text at least three times.2. Read the parts around your passage.3. Answer the following questions: Who wrote it? Why did they write it? Who was it written to?4. Underline all the important words5. Be sure you can give the meaning of the words6. Answer the following questions: What does the passage teach us about God? What does the passage teach us about mankind?7. Write down questions you can think of or questions you think someone might not be clear about.8. Find someone or something to help give meaning to important words and study the questions to be sure you can answer them in truth.9. Answer the following question: Is there a problem that this passage is written about? OR What important lesson is being taught?

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PART TWO: 20 MIN.

What troubles do we have that this passage could address?

Trouble in our relationship with God: Hard to pray, God seems distant ...

Trouble in our relationship with fellow man: Jealousy, loving people who are not kind ...

Trouble in our relationship with self: Feelings of guilt, struggling in sin, trouble sleeping ...

What was God saying to THEM (from day one)?

What is God saying to US (from day two)?

PART THREE: 15 MIN.

Read your passage or key passage again.

Decide on a sermon Focus and Function

Focus: this is what the sermon is about. Your sermon must be shortened into one sentence. For example, Gods loves his people even though they sin. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sin. God has a place prepared for us in heaven.

Function: To encourage, to motivate, to teach, to make ...

What do you want people to DO after they hear the Bible message.

PART FOUR: 15 MIN.

How does this passage / these passages teach God can solve the troubles we have (from day two)?

PART FIVE: 20 MIN.

Begin to write your sermon.

1. Get a blank piece of paper
 2. At the top in the middle write your sermon topic and or key text
 3. To the Left write your sermon Focus and your sermon Function
 4. Write a line down the middle to make two columns
 5. At the top of the first write 'in the text' and at the top of the second write 'in our world'.
 6. Using short points write the key points you want to make. Be sure you have a balance on each of the two columns.
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PART SIX: 45 MIN.

Write your Bible message full sermon. IF you need illustrations or specific examples make sure they are included.

TWO HOURS IN A WEEK PLAN

Part 1 30 min. Part 2 15 min. Part 3 15 min. Part 4 15 min. Part 5 15 min. Part 6 30 min.
