

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JESUS SPOKE AND PEOPLE WERE ASTONISHED:

DEVELOPING PASTORS WHO POSSESS
CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE
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ABSTRACT

When Jesus spoke, people were astonished. He not only delivered the most life-giving message ever uttered on this planet, but He did so in compelling and extraordinary ways. Today, however, there exists an evident lack of compelling and effective speakers representing this same life-giving message. Thankfully, however, the competencies utilized by Jesus remain discernable and learnable.

The Presenters Lab training model inherent in this project as its implementation, addresses this gap by helping the pastors and leaders of Meadowbrook Church to gain and grow in the skills needed to help them maximize their potential as effective communicators.

The Presenters Lab project was an eight-week intensive lecture–interaction seminar that resulted from biblical-theological and contemporary literature research on effective communication. Lab participants were trained in the elements employed by Jesus, as well as the corresponding skills used by notable, effective speakers in contemporary society. As a result, the pastors and leaders at Meadowbrook Church have noticeably improved as presenters, and exhibit a renewed passion and intentionality in their commitment to continue to grow in this important calling. In addition to its impact on the pastors and leaders of Meadowbrook Church, this project’s information and training can help serve as a broader resource for ministers today to grow more effective and persuasive as they communicate God’s Word.

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I am beyond grateful to the staff and family of Meadowbrook Church. I remain humbled and honored to lead this extraordinary church. Your support and constant encouragement enabled me to do this. I did this mainly for you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Context

I serve as the founding and senior pastor of Meadowbrook Church, an interdenominational, multi-cultural, multi-generational church in Ocala, Florida that in the summer of 2018 celebrated its twenty-eighth anniversary. I lead a staff of approximately one hundred gifted and committed men and women, of whom seventeen serve as full-time staff pastors overseeing various areas of ministry. The church has an unusual amount of longevity on its staff as well as a number of new, remarkably talented additions to the staff.

The staff helps lead a large and dedicated group of volunteers known as the Dream Team, which serves in all areas and functions of the ministry, from the parking lot to the altar. Every service, several hundred Dream Teamers make ministry possible. All Dream Team members have completed a four-week assimilation process called Growth Track. We encourage everyone to attend and complete Growth Track.

Small groups provide a vital part of the life of Meadowbrook. Individuals from within the congregation typically lead small groups, as do many of our staff members. Meadowbrook has a broad range of group types that embody what we refer to as a free market concept. The church consists of every type of group, ranging from kayak groups to Bible study groups. The current small group semester has over 140 different groups.

We emphasize and greatly value small group participation. We encourage congregants to not only gather in rows for the services, but also in circles for small groups.

In recent years, we have narrowed the focus of what we emphasize as a church. We focus our efforts on services, Growth Track, Dream Team, small groups, and outreach. This refined focus has energized the entire ministry and has greatly enhanced our effectiveness and stewardship of resources.

We livestream every church service and archive them, making the message available to anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world. We leverage technology heavily to help make our messages available. We even have a church app that serves as a tremendous tool for sharing live services, archived videos and audios, and teaching notes. On a typical Sunday morning, we have four services. Five thousand congregants attend in-house services each week, with an additional 3,500 people watching service online. Plans remain in motion to launch another campus of Meadowbrook Church in the fall of 2018.

Meadowbrook's staffing and structure have produced a healthy, large, and growing church family with these core values: biblical truth, authenticity, servant leadership, family, and excellence. All of the church staff and Dream Team members function with an active awareness of and embodiment of these values.

Problem

God has entrusted pastors and ministers with the greatest message on this planet. When Jesus finished teaching, His audience was astonished (Matt. 7:28); however, when many pastors and ministers today finish their teaching, too often the audience's responses differ starkly from what Jesus experienced. This deficit in communication impacts two

major aspects of ministry. First, the life-giving message of the gospel is not conveyed in an engaging manner. Second, when ministers have limited communication skills, they have limited leadership as well.

If leaders are to minister effectively, they must not only make decisions and discern directions but also communicate these decisions and directions to followers. While much could be said about decision-making, strategic planning, risk management, and a myriad of other leadership skills and paradigms, if leaders are not capable communicators, their leadership will be limited at best. Leaders, therefore, should make effective communication skills their chief pursuit. In whatever other ways they may be gifted or skilled as leaders, the degree to which they succeed or fail will undoubtedly remain connected to their ability to communicate.

Further, ministers of the gospel serve as representatives of the greatest teachings ever uttered on this earth. They hold the responsibility to effectively communicate these life-giving, life-changing teachings. Jesus not only taught truths and principles, He also modeled for His followers what it means to function as a master communicator. He not only had a clear and powerful message, He also had the ability to communicate that message in interesting, intelligible, and impactful ways. Jesus modeled effective communication skills and techniques still used today in all sectors of leadership, including business, politics, education, and even person to person.

In contrast, many contemporary teachers and preachers lack what Jesus had: a clear and powerful message conveyed in an engaging and impacting way. They lag behind with a vague, weakened, and blended theology, and a message that is a far cry from the life-giving, life-changing truths that Jesus declared. Many of these modern

ministers—and even many who have a good understanding of Jesus’s message—often present that message in boring and ineffective ways.¹

Such problems with effective communication are all further complicated by the reality that people today live in a world of virtual information overload. This information overload bombards them to the point that they can scarcely sort through and prioritize the most needed and relevant information, let alone somehow apply it in any meaningful way. The minister’s message ends up lost in a flood of trivia. Society’s modern, tech savvy culture deals around the clock with streams of messages from email, social media, texts, blog posts, all manner of multi-media advertising, and devices dinging and chirping in pockets and purses. As Tom Gillis notes, it is this “addiction to constant communication and multi-tasking that’s making a new generation dazed and confused.”² This world of information overload offers no space for the marginal communicator; the message of such a person simply will not be heard.

Yet this message must be heard. The truths Jesus presented make life better and help one to navigate through the varied events and seasons of life. Even those who may not fully embrace Christianity itself but only its principles can find benefit in the truth Christ taught. Communicators who ineffectively deliver the greatest truths ever told limit the potential impact of those truths in the lives of many. It remains imperative and possible to rediscover and revive both the heart of Jesus’s message and His teaching methods.

¹ David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 11-12.

² Tom Gillis, “Information Overload Makes Us Dazed and Confused,” *Forbes*, accessed October 5, 2015, <http://forbes.com/sites/tomgillis/2011/09/08/information-overload>.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to help the pastors and leaders of Meadowbrook Church in Ocala, Florida to reach their highest potential as communicators through participation in Presenters Lab.

Definition of Terms

Ethos – the appeal to ethics. It provides a means of convincing someone of the character or credibility of the persuader.

Glossophobia – speech anxiety; the fear of public speaking.

Logos – an appeal to logic. It can persuade an audience by reason.

Neuroscience – any or all of the sciences, such as neurochemistry and experimental psychology, which deal with the structure or function of the nervous system and brain.

Pathos – an appeal to emotion. It can convince an audience of an argument by creating an emotional response.

Presenter – a person who presents or communicates a message or information.

Presenter's Lab – an interactive, ongoing workshop to assist presenters in improving in their communication skills.

Rhetoric – the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.

Rhetorician – an expert in formal rhetoric; a speaker whose words are primarily intended to impress or persuade.

TED Talks – videos created from presentations at TED (technology, entertainment, design) conferences or one of its many satellite events around the

world. TED talks are limited to a maximum length of eighteen minutes but may be on any topic.

Description of the Proposed Project

Scope of the Project

In order to help develop the most effective and engaging presenters possible at Meadowbrook Church, I will develop a positive culture and a working lab that will cultivate and maximize the communication skills of Meadowbrook staff pastors and leaders. This lab will involve scheduled weekly meetings over a two-month period that will include lecture, instruction, modeling, mentoring, review, discussion, activities, and interaction dealing with the vital components that make one an effective communicator.

This project's biblical-theological review will explore numerous elements that characterize the way Jesus communicated, such as knowledge of His audience, the use of stories, the use of questions, compassion for His audience, only saying what He heard His Father saying, and several others. Further, this project's general literature review will glean and examine competencies utilized by current effective communicators from various fields and contexts in today's culture.

The field component of this project, the Presenter's Lab, will be divided into five different categories: experience, exegesis, exposure, evaluation, and engagement.

Experience will involve the hands-on active ministry areas in which each pastor has an ongoing responsibility to communicate. The Presenter's Lab will also teach exegesis to ensure that each participant remains well-versed in key interpretation skills of the biblical texts. The exposure component will include watching and listening to other teachers and communicators, either in person or through media. Evaluation will be done through self-

evaluation. Part of the lab curriculum will identify numerous aspects that Jesus embodied as a communicator. These will serve as the basis of the evaluations. Engagement will occur through active interaction in the group setting during the weekly labs. Underlying and emphasized throughout each of these categories will be the importance of each participant's personal spirituality and ongoing spiritual formation.

The purpose of this project is not to create a product line or secondary organization, nor should it detract from the focus of current leadership goals at Meadowbrook. Rather, the project will maximize the communicators at Meadowbrook Church in ways appropriate and beneficial to each pastor's area of ministry. Further, while participants can use most of these communication elements and skills in the marketplace, the central focus will remain on effectively communicating for Kingdom purposes. Attention will also be given to helping each participant implement an ongoing plan of continued development as an effective communicator.

Phases of the Project

The ministry intervention will comprise five phases: research, planning, implementation, evaluation, and writing.

Research

The research phase will serve as the foundation for designing and implementing the ministry intervention. The first stage of the research will involve a thorough biblical-theological examination of Scripture to gain insight from God's character, plan, and methods for communicating with His creation. God has always been a God who actively communicates with His prized creation, humankind. Scripture shows the progression of God speaking creation into existence, speaking to the first man and woman, and then

speaking to and through the prophets. As the New Testament dawns, God speaks through a special prophet named John, who opens the way for God's son, Jesus, who is the culmination of God speaking to humankind. Scripture shows that as Jesus finishes His earthly ministry, He passes the responsibility on to His apostles to speak to the people on God's behalf. In time, God gives this same responsibility to those He calls into ministry.

Additionally, research will illustrate the effectiveness of Jesus as the master communicator. This study will examine the elements of effective communication as modeled by Jesus. These competencies will direct the focus of what helps one to be successful in his or her efforts to communicate.

The biblical-theological research will inform the topics studied in contemporary general literature. This phase of the research will explore the elements used by current, notable communicators. Correlation can be found between the skills utilized by Jesus and those skills exhibited by effective speakers today. A thorough look at the age-old components of rhetoric—ethos, pathos, and logos—will serve as a framework in which to place each element of compelling communication.

Additionally, the general research will examine a number of significant studies and discoveries from the field of neuroscience. This portion of the research will reveal extraordinary aspects of how the human brain is wired for and responds to communication.

Planning

The planning phase of the ministry intervention, or Presenters Lab, will synthesize the information and themes gained from the biblical-theological and general literature reviews. From this information, a project will emerge that can be used with

pastors and ministry leaders. The planning phase will involve organizing the information gained and formulating a strategy to introduce, explore, and focus on certain learnable skills that will elevate one's ability as a communicator.

To gain some measurement of the results of the project, a pre- and post-session self-evaluation form will be designed. Each participant will also write a brief post-session narrative conveying what they gained from the Presenters Lab.

A schedule will be chosen marking out an eight-week period for the project. An appropriate room will be chosen and reserved at Meadowbrook Church, which will best accommodate the size of the group and the function of the session. Participants will be invited via email and requested to reply confirming their participation. The participants invited will be the staff pastors and various other ministry leaders whose duties involve speaking and presenting.

The final steps of the planning phase will involve writing the curriculum for an eight-week seminar and creating an accompanying PowerPoint presentation for each session. Also, a number of video clips will be chosen and edited for time, which will be used as discussion points throughout the labs.

Implementation

The Presenters Lab will be held during April and May 2017. I will facilitate all eight sessions in a lecture and discussion format, supported by PowerPoint, handouts, and a variety of video clips. The sessions will be one hour in duration, except for the final two sessions, which will be ninety minutes in length.

Evaluation

I will endeavor to gauge the effectiveness of the Presenter's Lab with quantitative and qualitative results. As a quantitative tool, the pre-session self-evaluation will be compared with the corresponding post-session self-evaluation to estimate positive outcomes. As a qualitative tool, the assigned overview narrative will allow the participants to express their thoughts and assessments of what they have gained from the Presenters Lab. The goal is to produce improvement in each participant on the presented competencies, as well as to develop a strong awareness of the need for improvement in each participant for each of the areas discussed. These measurement tools will be tabulated and assessed after the conclusion of the Presenters Lab.

Writing

Writing will occur throughout the entirety of the project, beginning in October 2016 and concluding in September 2017. Writing the biblical-theological literature review (chapter 2) and the general literature review (chapter 3) will inform the ministry intervention project. The field project and its results will then be examined in chapter 4, which will then be followed by a summary and evaluation of the entire project in chapter 5.

Conclusion

As society grows increasingly less church friendly and less accepting of the concept of truth as an absolute, ministry effectiveness has less margin for error. The core of effective ministry centers on the effective communication of the truths of God's Word. God has given us the responsibility to respond in today's context, which demands an intentional and concerted effort of ministers everywhere to continually improve as presenters. Though I cannot influence every minister, I can impact those ministers and

leaders whom I have been entrusted to lead, helping them to reach their maximum potential as effective communicators for the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 2: BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Throughout the biblical narrative, God reveals himself as a God who speaks.¹ As the Creator, God uses His words to create a beautiful and intricately complex world, one that became home for His treasured creation, humankind, made in His own likeness and image. God designed people for fellowship with Him, and communication serves as a vital aspect of this fellowship.

The entrance of sin interrupts the beauty of creation and thus the fellowship between God's original couple and himself. Still, God desires to communicate with humans, although the focus of that communication has now become the need to reach and redeem humankind from sin. God remains a speaking God and chooses to speak through various individuals and groups.

Throughout redemptive history, God reveals, warns, invites, and instructs humankind by speaking through people. God declares His word through the prophets, through Christ, through the apostolate², and finally through His ministers whom He calls

¹ The following chapter is adapted from Tim Gilligan, "Christ Spoke – People Were Astonished: Communicating for Impact," a course paper for PTH 902: Biblical Theology in Ministry, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, May 2014.

² Apostolate refers to both the mission and the representational authority of someone sent on a mission by a superior. In Christianity, an apostle refers to the authoritative mission conferred by Christ on His disciples, one that distinguishes the Twelve and later other specific people to continue His mission on earth after His resurrection and ascension

to preach and communicate. He tasks them to share God's heart and words to the people He loves and desires to redeem back into fellowship with Him. God also gives authority to His people to speak for Him.

This biblical-theological review will examine several aspects of the progression of God speaking, the prophets speaking, Christ speaking, and the apostles speaking, culminating in how the contemporary minister should approach speaking. In particular, numerous aspects related to Christ speaking inform and provide the standard for the minister today.

God Speaks

From the beginning of the Scriptures, which describe the establishment of creation, the eternal Almighty speaks; when He speaks, there exists power. Things happen. Genesis, the book of beginnings, declares, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light" (Gen. 1:1-3).³ The first action recorded in Scripture is speech, God's speech.⁴ Notably, speech also serves as the last act of God recorded in Scripture (Rev. 22:20). Beyond what God establishes by the creative power of His words, God's speech validates the authority upon which the rest of the Bible depends.⁵ Words, whether written or spoken, become the vehicle used to convey

³ All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New King James Version.

⁴ C. D. Linton, "Speech," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 594.

⁵ Ibid., 594.

both power and meaning. The power of communication and speech begins with God, the One who speaks. God himself establishes words as the primary medium of exchange and change.

The Psalmist exclaims, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made” (Ps. 33:6). God’s words not only establish and create, but His dynamic words also sustain the universe.⁶ Both Testaments clearly emphasize this core declaration. The prophet Isaiah contrasts the short-lived beauty of the grass and the flowers with the enduring words of God who created them (Isa. 40:6-9). The Apostle Peter quotes Isaiah regarding the same (1 Pet. 1:23-25). Peter further writes that the word of God formed the earth (2 Pet. 3:5). The author of Hebrews provides formidable support of this idea: “The universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Heb. 11:3, ESV). Further, the writer reveals that God’s Word not only created the universe, it sustains it (1:3, NIV).

Although God created everything through speech, His first verbal exchange occurs in Eden, where He speaks with the first man, whom He had created (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:9-19).⁷ Throughout the Old Testament, God speaks “always in a context initiating and pursuing a relationship with [humanity].”⁸ God’s Word, written or spoken, directly or indirectly, serves as a brand of communication from God to people. He chooses to use human language. In every form or dialect of human language, however imperfect and

⁶ R. B. Edwards, “Word,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 1104.

⁷ T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., “Word,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Logos Bible Software.

⁸ Ibid.

limited, God speaks to people in a language they understand. Reflecting His love and grace, the infinite, high, and holy God condescends to finite and sinful humanity even in the use of language.⁹ Unless men and women can hear from and communicate with God, they certainly will remain eternally lost.

Initially and intermittently, God speaks directly to certain individuals. In Eden, God speaks with Adam and Eve before and after the incident with the serpent and the forbidden fruit. He also speaks in a range of communication, which moves from fellowship and communion to instruction and warnings, correction, judgment, discipline, and eventually restoration.

In due time, God begins to establish covenants with people, as He did with Abraham. In Genesis 12:1, God speaks to Abram, who would later be named Abraham. The passage uses the Hebrew word *âmar* to indicate not only that God is speaking, but He also calls and commands Abraham to do something.¹⁰ In Genesis 15, God again engages with Abraham, but this interaction uses another mode and reveals a different tone: “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great’” (v. 1, ESV). God brings the word of the Lord to Abraham in a vision rather than speaking audibly to him as He had previously done. The Hebrew for *word*, as in the word of the Lord, is *dâbâr*, which signifies spoken words or speech and carries a sense of advice or encouragement.¹¹

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Charles L. Feinberg, “אָמַר 118,” ed. R. Laird Harris, L. Archer Gleason Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 54.

¹¹ Ibid.

Progression through redemptive history reveals God interacting with Moses in the giving of the Torah.¹² This, too, involves much verbal communication between Moses and the Lord. Their exchange proves quite conversational (Exod. 19-23). During these discussions, Moses receives the Ten Commandments from the Lord (34:28).

Regarding the Davidic Covenant, the Lord speaks through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4-17).¹³ This interaction not only involves God speaking to an individual, Nathan the prophet, but it also includes God using an individual to speak to others on His behalf. Here begins the issuance of God's word through the prophets, which carries the same import as when He directly speaks to Abraham and Moses.¹⁴ The true God speaks, revealing himself and His will to humankind.¹⁵ The Old Testament abounds with God's communication, but Israel described those seasons in which God did not speak in one form or another as famines.¹⁶ The prophet Amos exclaims, "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord GOD, 'That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD'" (Amos 8:11). Israel viewed God's word as vital for nourishment.

Hundreds of times throughout this vast, rich testament, God reveals himself, His plans, warnings, or will through theophanies, dreams, visions, writings, or messages

¹² Alexander and Rosner, "Word," 848.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Edwards, 1105.

¹⁵ Alexander and Rosner, 850.

¹⁶ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "The Words of God," in *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1309.

given through others.¹⁷ God's revelatory word comes to the world at many times and in many ways—creation, prophecy, the Law, the Scriptures, and spiritual openings—yet in the fullness of time, God speaks in His son Jesus Christ, the source and heir of all things (Heb. 1:1–4).¹⁸

God speaks, and His word actively establishes, guides, blesses, judges, and delivers. Since His word reveals His character and declares His will, His word remains part of His relationship with humankind.¹⁹ The conviction that God has spoken forms the foundation of biblical theology and Christianity. Through His word, God has revealed himself, His will, and His actions on behalf of His people and the world. God's word has always come to His people in the context of His personal relationship with them, as an expression of His grace and power in their historical circumstances.²⁰ The content of the Word of God also reveals itself in relational terms. God does not simply speak about objective realities; the Word of God does not simply constitute data or information. The various texts reveal a divine concern about a considerable range of matters that bear on His relationship with humankind (Num. 12:1-8; Zech. 7:9-10; Gen. 35:10).²¹ Truly, God speaks the language of love.

¹⁷ Alexander and Rosner, 850.

¹⁸ Paul N. Anderson, "Word, The," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 894.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ B. M. Fanning, "Word," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 848.

²¹ Terence E. Fretheim, "Word of God," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 964.

In the days following creation, God entrusted His newly created Adam with the power of speaking words. He charged him with the responsibility of naming all animal life, livestock, birds, and wild animals: “Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name” (Gen. 2:19). Whatever Adam named them, that was their name. This portrays the immense power of the spoken word, a privilege and responsibility given by God to humankind.

The Prophets Speak

Throughout the majority of the Old Testament, God’s revelation comes through a group of people known as prophets. The Old Testament Hebrew word *nabi* usually translates as “prophet,” but it may also mean “spokesman” or “speaker.”²² The New Testament Greek for prophet comprises the prefix *pro*, which denotes “before, in front of, or in the place of” and the root word *faume*, which means “to speak.” Thus, the word indicates that a prophet speaks for someone else or in the place of another. The prophets of God speak for God.²³ They not only speak for God or in His place, but they speak God’s words to the people. Prophets exist to hear and speak what the Lord has spoken to them. They function as recipients and transmitters of the word from the Lord (Isa. 1:2;

²² William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 544.

²³ Chris Poblete, “Who Were the Old Testament Prophets?” Blue Letter Bible Blog, January 23, 2013, accessed April 14, 2014, <http://blogs.blueletterbible.org/blb/2013/01/23/who-were-the-old-testament-prophets/>.

6:8-10).²⁴ In a sense, prophets embodied the word of God. Beyond what they spoke or wrote, the prophet carried and lived the word of God, helping people both see and hear what God was speaking to them.²⁵

Beginning with Moses, Scripture then unveils a long line of prophets who both speak and write God's words.²⁶ This continues until John the Baptist, who represents the last of the Old Testament prophets. As John the Baptist concludes his ministry, Jesus comes onto the scene, and a new prophetic era begins.²⁷

Returning to Moses, shortly before his death, Moses describes the responsibilities of the Levitical priests: "They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar" (Deut. 33:10). Before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, Moses clarifies that the Levites also would hold a unique and important function in speaking for God. Leviticus 10:11 echoes this important role; they were to teach the Law of God. This practice continues throughout Jewish history until the time of Jesus.²⁸

²⁴ Paul J. Achtemeier, "Word," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 1141.

²⁵ Fretheim, 966.

²⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 624.

²⁷ Poblete.

²⁸ Glyn Williams, "The Biblical and Theological Basis for Expository Preaching," LinkedIn, August 27, 2014, accessed March 1, 2016, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140827064114-16596427-the-biblical-and-theological-basis-for-expository-preaching_.

The Prophets Speak in Warning

The Scriptures warn against the presence of false prophets. God usually deals swiftly and severely with them, as He does not take kindly to others misrepresenting Him.²⁹ Moses, speaking for God, says, “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die” (Deut. 18:20). Further, Moses recounts how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed a number of men as a warning to the sons of Korah. These men had resisted Moses’s God-given authority and questioned God’s word through him (Num. 26:10-11).

After a standoff between God’s prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal, God prevails as the true God by answering with fire and consuming the altar. Once the victory became obvious to all, Elijah ordered the seizure and execution of these false prophets (1 Kings 18:40). Though this penalty may seem extreme, it exemplified the importance of the role of prophets and the vital role they play in His communication and relationship to people. God would not tolerate false prophets.

Although false prophets may speak lying words, God’s word through His true prophets remains totally dependable (1 Kings 17:16).³⁰ The prophet had to keep pure to properly represent Him. God commanded prophets to not change even one word of what He had revealed to them (Deut. 4:2).³¹ Truly, the prophet served as both a messenger and servant of the Lord (Isa. 42:19) and was considered a seer (30:10). The true prophets of

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Edwards, 1102.

³¹ Poblete.

God consistently attested that the words they conveyed were not their own but rather came from God.³² God wanted the people to know that He would use a priest to “guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Mal. 2:7).

The Prophets Speak for God

Priests

The priests, as messengers of God, served not to simply read God’s Law to the people, but they needed to ensure that the people understood what God was saying to them: “They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (Neh. 8:8). Reading God’s Law to the people enabled them to understand and respond to it, ensuring they received His message.

Moses

Considered a great prophet, Moses predicted that God would one day raise up another prophet like himself (Deut. 8:15), a reference to the ultimate coming of Jesus.³³ Moses referred to himself as a prophet, yet because of his protests to God over his speaking ability, God sent Aaron, his brother, to serve as Moses’s prophet. Aaron fulfilled the role of a prophet because he spoke on behalf of Moses.³⁴ Scripture records that “Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people” (Exod. 4:30).

³² Ibid.

³³ Grudem, 626.

³⁴ Poblete.

Ezekiel and Amos

Throughout the Old Testament, God had a line of true and powerful prophets who said what the Lord said, such as Ezekiel, whose name remains synonymous with the title of prophet. God told Ezekiel to speak His words to the people whether or not they received the words (Ezek. 2:7). The prophet Amos gives insight into the innate power of the prophet's role as he writes, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:7-8).

Isaiah

One of the most prolific and important prophets of God was Isaiah, who remains noted for his firm and bold delivery of the word, seemingly unhindered by fear of people. His consistent and deep reverence for "the holy One of Israel" came through in all he did and said.³⁵ He not only announced judgment for Israel's rebellion, but he also gave the clearest prophetic glimpse of the coming Messiah. Jesus himself quotes Isaiah, as do the Gospel writers. Luke references Isaiah's prophecy regarding the coming of John the Baptist (Luke 3:4). John's Gospel recounts Isaiah's words that foretold the people's unbelief and rejection of Jesus because their eyes had been blinded and their hearts hardened (John 12:38). The prophets of Israel serve as a vivid antecedent in the historical basis of preaching and teaching as a means by which God communicates with and

³⁵ M. G. Easton, "Isaiah" in *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), Logos Bible Software.

instructs His people.³⁶ The prophets' role existed to clearly communicate divine truth from God to the people.

A Variety of Prophets

God's use of the prophets, both male and female, remained notable throughout the Old Testament (Exod. 15:20-21; Judg. 4:4; 6:8-10; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Chron. 35:18; Mic. 6:4). By the time of the judges, the ministry of the prophet was on the rise. There also existed a school of the prophets under Samuel's leadership (1 Sam. 10:5-10; 19:18-20). Additional schools of the prophets established in other places as well. These schools of the prophets existed to properly train individuals for the prophetic and priestly offices (vv. 18-24; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 12, 15).³⁷

Notably, God used several women as prophets in the Old Testament: Miriam (Exod. 15:20), Deborah (Judg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), and Anna (Luke 2:36); however, Noadiah was a false prophet who endeavored to discourage Nehemiah.³⁸ It remains significant that Joel also wrote of a time when both sons and daughters would prophesy (Joel 2:28).

³⁶ Dennis Phelps, "The Biblical Basis for Christian Preaching," Biblical Studies, accessed October 11, 2016, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jbtm/06-2_011.pdf

³⁷ M. G. Easton, "Schools of the Prophets," in *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), Logos Bible Software.

³⁸ Chad Brand et al., eds., "Prophetess," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1336.

The Prophet Speaks As A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

Early in the Gospels, a prophet unlike the others arises to bridge the Old Testament to the New Testament—the “voice of one crying on the wilderness” (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). This prophet named John remains provocative and unconventional as he calls people to repent, announces a coming Kingdom and the Messiah, and baptizes people in the river Jordan. John remains the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets and the first witness and martyr in the New Testament. John serves as the historic link between the Old Testament prophets and those who spoke for God in the New Testament. Other prophets spoke of the coming of this prophet, declaring he would come in the spirit of Elijah, another of the great Old Testament prophets (Mal. 4:5). Jesus, speaking of John, declares, “Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28). Luke further verifies that John the Baptist passes the litmus test for prophets in that the “word of God [*rhema theou*] comes through him” (Luke 3:2).³⁹

Desiring to speak to humankind, God uses prophets as His spokespersons. They spoke to people on behalf of God.⁴⁰ Whether messages of judgment or messages of hope, God uses prophets (Isa. 40; Jer. 30-31; Ezek. 37).⁴¹ The true biblical prophet’s function

³⁹ Edwards, 1104.

⁴⁰ Poblete.

⁴¹ Alexander and Rosner, 854.

served to receive and then deliver the message of God to the people. On occasion, this included speaking forth the Word of God regarding the future.⁴²

Christ as Prophet

Considering the broader sense of the term *prophet* as one who reveals God to people and speaks to them the words of God, Christ was indeed truly a prophet.⁴³

Although the Gospels do not present Jesus primarily as a prophet, He no doubt fulfilled that role.⁴⁴ Those who heard His teachings and witnessed His works readily recognized Jesus as a prophet. He spoke with a unique authority on behalf of God's purposes, nature, and word (Luke 24:19).⁴⁵ In Him, Old Testament prophets' words became fulfilled.⁴⁶

Peter identified Jesus as the prophet predicted by Moses.⁴⁷ As Peter preached on Solomon's porch following the healing of the lame man, he declares,

For Moses truly said to the fathers, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days (Acts 3:22-24).

⁴² Poblete.

⁴³ Grudem, 626.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Martin H. Manser, "Jesus Christ, as Prophet," in *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009), Logos Bible Software.

⁴⁶ Eugene E. Carpenter and Philip W. Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 142.

⁴⁷ Grudem, 627.

There had long been an expectation that a prophet like Moses would come. After the miracle of Jesus feeding the multitude by multiplying the loaves and fish, some exclaimed, “This is indeed the prophet who is come into the world” (John 6:14; 7:40).⁴⁸ The Old Testament prophets clearly looked forward to Christ, as evidenced in their writings. The New Testament apostles looked back to Christ as the one whom the prophets had spoken, the one foretold by Moses.⁴⁹

Christ’s coming dramatically shifted the role of the prophet. Jesus did not simply carry a message or revelation from God, as all previous prophets had done. Rather, He was himself the source and subject of the message and revelation from God. Whereas all prophets before Him had prefaced their message with “thus says the Lord,” Christ often began His teachings with a different statement of authority: “But I say unto you” (Matt. 5:22).⁵⁰ Jesus, the Son of God, was the Word of God in the flesh. He was Immanuel, “God with us” (Matt.1:23). Jesus was, in fact, God speaking directly to humankind.

As for the Old Testament prophets, the word of the Lord came to them; however, Christ spoke on His own authority as the living and eternal Word of God (John 1:1). Jesus exactly and perfectly reflects God the Father, as He tells Phillip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (14:9). Jesus remained adamant throughout His ministry that He had only come to do the will of the Father, only saying and doing what He heard the Father saying and saw the Father doing. His entire redemptive role existed in submission

⁴⁸ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), John 6:14.

⁴⁹ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 271.

⁵⁰ Grudem.

to the Father. Truly Jesus was a prophet in the fullest sense, yet He alone could be a prophet in the dimension that He carried out as indicated in Hebrews: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (1:1-2). Jesus came as the ultimate prophet.

Notably, Jesus emphasizes that individuals have a clear understanding of God’s Word, the Scriptures, that He conveys to them. For example, in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus walks with two men on the road to the village of Emmaus, “and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27, NIV). He desired to show these men that He fulfills everything they had already learned. He did not simply quote or read Scriptures to them. He referenced Moses, the Law, and all the prophets to provide basis and perspective. It remained vital that these men understood the Scriptures. After Jesus had left their presence, in a rather supernatural manner, the men recounted, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32). This event exemplifies how Jesus conveyed the Scriptures in such a way as to provide not only clarity but also impact. He had set their hearts on fire.

Jesus Speaks

Jesus’s teachings, which constitute a major portion of what Jesus did in His earthly ministry, impacted His audiences. Luke begins the Book of Acts with a summation of Jesus’s life and ministry, describing it as two categories—what He did and what He taught (Acts 1:1). He often taught in the synagogues and in the temple (John 18:20). He taught while sitting in a boat, walking along roads, in houses, on hillsides, and

whenever opportunities arose. Sometimes He spoke only to an individual, such as the woman at the well (John 4). At other times, He would suddenly be moved with compassion as a multitude would gather, and He would begin to speak and teach (Mark 6:34). The content of what Jesus said and taught is not always told. In Mark's Gospel, apart from chapters 4 and 13, the Scriptures remain silent on what He taught.⁵¹ In the broad view of the Gospels, however, it remains clear that when Jesus spoke, He almost always taught. He came as the Living Word.

Jesus's teaching went beyond prophetic revelation. Central to His mission, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God through teaching, preaching, and healing (Matt. 4:23; 9:35).⁵² He spoke as one commissioned by God and endowed with the Spirit (Mark 1:10-15).⁵³ As a result, the New Testament often notes that Jesus spoke with remarkable authority (Mark 1:22; Matt. 5:21-48).⁵⁴ In summary, Jesus served not only as the centerpiece of God's message to humankind, but He spoke as a model communicator, effectively using numerous elements such as parables and targeted questions.

Parables

As a teacher and master storyteller, Jesus used similes, metaphors, images, and stories to create powerful word pictures to convey a clear and compelling message. He used these tools and elements as part of His favorite communication tool, the parable. As

⁵¹ Timothy J. Geddert, *Mark*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 47.

⁵² Edwards, 1106.

⁵³ Geddert, 47.

⁵⁴ Edwards, 1106.

Jesus spoke to individuals, taught massive crowds, or shared with an intimate group, in every setting, He effectively and nearly exclusively uses parables, as noted by Matthew and Mark: “He said nothing to them without a parable” (Matt. 13:34; Mark 4:34).

His parables remain captivating and effective today, just as when He first taught them in Palestine nearly two thousand years ago. Moreover, His message and methods have endured and impacted virtually every country, culture, and generation. Centuries after He first told them, His teachings such as the Good Samaritan and the Wheat and the Tares still represent life principles across religious, cultural, and philosophical lines.

The Nature of the Parable

The Greek word *parabole* means “an illustration, a comparison, or an analogy, usually in story form, using common events of everyday life to reveal a moral or a spiritual truth”⁵⁵ Because Jesus primarily spoke in Aramaic, this Greek definition does not fully convey the essence of the parables that Jesus used. The more accurate word for Jesus’s parables is the Aramaic word *mashal*, which sometimes refers to a proverb, a byword, satire, taunt, or even a word of derision. It also can mean a riddle, an allegory, a metaphor, a figurative saying, or a simile or similitude.⁵⁶ Jesus most likely used the parable as a metaphor or a simile. Still, there exists no single, definitive definition that would apply to each of His parables. The idea of a metaphor or simile supports and utilizes the idea of *mashal*, which means to lay something next to another thing for comparison and learning; therefore, a parable remains more than simply an illustration.

⁵⁵ Stein, 16.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 18.

Others suggest that parables form a secondary message. Søren Kierkegaard states that the structure of parables provides indirect communication intended to “deceive the hearer into truth.”⁵⁷ This works as a type of bait and switch, in which the speaker uses the familiar to give something new. However, this deception is not of the devious variety: “At its simplest, the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”⁵⁸ This method proves quite useful for even those with hard hearts or the disinterested, who upon hearing a presentation on morals or truths find themselves involved and interested in the parable. This effectiveness reflects the genius of the parable.

Rabbis considered parables as a sort of handle for understanding the Torah. Prior to Solomon and others introducing parables, people generally did not understand the Torah. In the same way, Jesus used the parables as a handle to help people understand His central teaching and message of the kingdom of God.⁵⁹ When Jesus’s disciples came to Him and asked Him why He spoke to the people in parables, He answered,

Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That’s why I tell stories: *to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight*. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they’re blue in the face and not get it.” (Matt.13:11-13, The Message, emphasis mine).

Jesus used parables to help His hearers become more receptive to His message.

⁵⁷ Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 8.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 7.

A Familiar Method

Jesus's first century audience felt quite comfortable with the parabolic method of teaching: "Perhaps no other mode of teaching was so common among the Jews as that by parables ... every ancient rabbinic work is literally full of parables."⁶⁰ In fact, the Old Testament contains numerous parables, such as found in the Book of Ezekiel, which refers to their use among the Israelites (17:2). Perhaps one of the most poignant Old Testament uses of a parable exists in 2 Samuel, when the prophet Nathan tells a parable to skillfully disarm and confront King David of his sin of adultery and murder. The parable makes David incensed at the injustice in the story. With David's heart open, Nathan then wields this parable as the Word of the Lord, and David repents of his sins.⁶¹

Retention Is the Reason

The frequency with which Jesus used parables testifies to their effectiveness. These down to earth, real life stories clearly portrayed and reflected the world in which they lived. By using them, He relayed great truths and deep theology in simple, concise, and memorable ways. His parables spoke of family life and relationships, such as that of the Prodigal Son. They told of agriculture, business, weddings, feasts, the rich and the poor, governments, kings, salt, light, candles, trees, and motives, among other things. These seized the attention of the hearers in relatable and powerful ways, always bringing them in contact with a Kingdom truth.⁶² Admittedly, however, some parables required

⁶⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 400-404.

⁶¹ Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), 35.

⁶² David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 13.

further explanation, or sometimes the meaning remained hidden from those with closed hearts and minds (Luke 8:9-10).⁶³

Jesus's parables had the noteworthy ability to remain unforgettable. The details in the parables proved so relatable and familiar, they helped make the truth tucked into it easy to remember. This remains important because Jesus's whole goal and purpose of teaching parables centered on changing lives. Life change can only take place when the truth finds application in one's life, and one cannot apply what one cannot remember. The power and beauty of the parable make retention of the message almost unavoidable, which explains why Jesus constantly used it.

Relating or comparing a truth or virtue with the familiar makes understanding less complicated and retention more likely. This serves not only as the purpose of the parable, but it also defines it. Children in Sunday school class learn that a parable tells an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. While correct in some aspects, this explanation does not provide a complete picture. An English dictionary or encyclopedia offers similar definitions with minor variations: "A short story using events and objects of everyday life to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth."⁶⁴ This English understanding of the parable falls short when examining the Greek, the language of the New Testament. Looking at the Greek origin of the word *parable* provides better insight into the meaning of the word as understood by the first-century listeners.

⁶³ Manser, "Jesus Christ, Parables of."

⁶⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2009 ed., s.v. "parable."

The Master Storyteller

During His brief earthly ministry of approximately three and a half years, Jesus taught anywhere from thirty to fifty parables, depending on the differing classifications or lists that scholars have developed. Of Jesus's recorded spoken words, He told stories 65 percent of the time, a figure that roughly mirrors the percent of story form or narrative used throughout the entire Bible, which stands at 75 percent.⁶⁵ On occasion, Jesus would use several parables to paint a verbal collage to teach or emphasize a truth or topic, such as in Matthew 13:3 when "He told them many things in parables." In Mark's Gospel, He gave back-to-back illustrations to explain the kingdom of God (Mark 4:26-32). Obviously, Jesus considered this style of teaching effective.

Because Jesus heavily used parables and stories to communicate, one would wisely consider learning how to use them today to convey God's marvelous truths. One may draw from personal experiences, imagination, history, and the Scriptures themselves. There remains no lack of sources for stories; they remain readily within reach to deliver a memorable truth. In addition, communicators need to study Jesus's example, who modeled audience awareness, compassion, engagement, and skill.

Knowing One's Audience

As one observes Jesus teaching people through parables, a number of communication practices grow apparent. First, He had an acute awareness of exactly who constituted His audience in any given situation. With that awareness, Jesus then would

⁶⁵ Bruce H. Wilkinson, *Teaching with Style* (Fort Mill, SC: Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, 1994), 82; Colin Harbinson, "Restoring the Arts to the Church: The Role of Creativity in the Expression of Truth," accessed April 12, 2017, <http://colinharbinson.com/teaching/resthearts.html>.2006.

appropriately craft His parable or message to speak to everyone in attendance, in one way or another.⁶⁶ No one left without His message making an impact to some degree. Upon hearing His message, people would leave angry, repentant, astonished, or in some other state of mind (John 6:42, 52, 60-61, 66).⁶⁷ While He may have aimed the parable at a certain group or individual, everyone hearing it felt included and gained some message or insight; therein lies the beauty of the parable. The message, however, can only relate to others when the speaker remains aware of the audience. An effective communicator will put in the time and effort to tailor the message to the audience.⁶⁸ Ministers, in particular, must also remain aware of the audience's state of mind.

Compassion for One's Audience

At the heart of effective communication lies compassion. Jesus frequently moved with compassion for the people, even at the end of long days.⁶⁹ Matthew describes an intense few days of ministry when Jesus heals a paralytic, raises a little girl from the dead, heals two blind men, and casts out a demon. He then travels through cities and villages teaching and preaching, but at the climax of all of this, compassion for the people still moves Him (Matt. 9:35-36). At the heart of fruitful ministry is the preaching and teaching of God's word, delivered from a minister full of compassion. Speakers must

⁶⁶ Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 325.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁶⁸ Deanna Kotrla, "6 Common Characteristics of Effective Communicators," Vanderbloemen Search Group Blog, entry posted June 10, 2013, accessed July 21, 2016, <http://www.vanderbloemen.com/blog/6-common-characteristics-of-effective-communicators>.

⁶⁹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Compassion," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 504.

care and feel concern for the audience to whom one has the privilege to speak.⁷⁰ Love gives license to speak truth. It gives but does not take. Compassion remains one of the most vital elements of connection with the audience in sharing the gospel. It opens the way for growth, healing, maturity, and even miracles.

Although a message in a parable may convey truth on several different levels, it is intended to teach one or two main points. While there might exist numerous ancillary and symbolic lessons in the message, it typically makes one or two central points. Instead of an overload of information or some lengthy list of items to remember and act upon, it offers a featured and focused message. While lists end on paper, a single, focused idea has a way of penetrating the heart and mind.

Engaging One's Audience

While the need to convey doctrine and theology remains vital, the means of doing so must remain palatable, engaging, and even winsome. Herein lies the value of the parable with its story full of characters, places, and things to which people can relate.⁷¹ Stories have the capacity to deliver truth without coming across as preachy or stuffy. People willingly enter a story and automatically connect with the characters and scenarios, leading them to face ideas and respond, or even to reject the truth that sits at

⁷⁰ Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 105.

⁷¹ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "Parables of Jesus," in *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 989; David Seal, "Parable," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016) Logos Bible Software.

the heart of the story. Effective communicators know how to tell stories well, using color and characters found in history, experiences, imagination, Scripture, and literature.

Research supports that the human brain is programmed much more for stories than for abstract ideas.⁷² Spending the time and effort to carefully exegete the Scripture proves insufficient on its own. It remains equally vital to deliver the truth unearthed from Scripture in a way that the audience can readily receive.

Making Connections through Strategic Questioning

Communication requires connection. The whole goal of communication centers on influencing and impacting one's audience, not just putting forth facts and ideas.⁷³

Parables and stories have an incredible ability to connect people to the message, but when coupled with the use of questions, speakers can intensify connections. Questions have the ability to bring hearers to a point of realization, even forcing them to answer the question within themselves, whether or not they desire to do so, as illustrated by Jesus. Jesus often would respond to a question posed to Him with another question, bringing even greater focus to the issue at hand. Effective communicators must craft and develop questions that will help the audience consider, discover, and reinforce spoken truths.

Jesus used strategic questioning to connect with his audience. One such instance occurs in Luke's Gospel when a Pharisee named Simon invites Jesus for a meal at his house. A woman from the city, a known sinner, hears about this and comes, bringing an

⁷² John C. Maxwell, *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 192.

⁷³ Peter Rhea Jones, "Parables," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1244.

alabaster flask of fragrant oil. She starts weeping and washes His feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair. She kisses His feet and then anoints them with the fragrant oil. Simon, in true Pharisaical form, questions Jesus's status as a prophet and looks with disdain at this woman.⁷⁴ He did not believe that a true prophet would allow this woman to touch Him. Jesus responds to him with a brief parable and then a strategic question: "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" (Luke 7:41-42). Here, Jesus poses a question that cuts to the point, leaving Simon with only one obvious right answer.⁷⁵ Simon, now getting the message and feeling convicted, answers, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." Jesus responds, "You have rightly judged" (v. 43). This strategic questioning brings Simon to the right answer for himself. Jesus knew and used questions in a powerful way. Whether He was teaching, responding to a situation, or fending off an attempt by His enemies to verbally trap Him, He would, on occasion, wield the power of a question.

In teaching, using a question remains an effective tool to grab an audience's attention from the beginning. Just as using a quote, citing a statistic, recounting a current news item, using humor or issuing a challenge, posing a question remains a proven

⁷⁴ François Bovon and Helmut Koester, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 295.

⁷⁵ John D. Barry et al., *Faith-life Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Luke 7:42.

technique for a strong start to a presentation. Asking pertinent questions connects to the concerns and dreams of one's audience and immediately draws them in.⁷⁶

Strategic questions also provide an effective way to conclude a message. Through them, speakers can direct their point and call for a response, just as Jesus does when He tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. He tells the story as a reply to a question by a lawyer regarding the meaning of the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:25-37). In the parable, Jesus simply yet starkly contrasts three different individuals' reactions toward a beaten and robbed individual. In conclusion, Jesus then asks a question: “So which one of these was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?” (v. 36). The lawyer ends up answering his original question when responding to Jesus's parable and question: “He who showed mercy” (v. 37). Jesus then calls him to action and says, “Go and do likewise” (v. 37).⁷⁷

The Need for Anointing

No matter how skilled communicators may become, one factor remains vitally necessary to truly convey the life-giving, life-changing message: the presence of God's Spirit and His anointing to aid and empower the communicator. Jesus himself recognizes this anointing, stating, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18).⁷⁸ The need for anointing remains greatest

⁷⁶ Timothy J. Koegel, *The Exceptional Presenter: A Proven Formula to Open Up! and Own the Room* (Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press, 2007), 44.

⁷⁷ Wenham, 157-158.

⁷⁸ J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 200.

to truly accomplish one's purpose and ensure the message has lasting impact.

Communicators must demonstrate a sincere and utter dependence on the Holy Spirit for His empowerment and anointing to properly communicate the message.⁷⁹

Though many other skills and techniques can enhance efforts at communication, none remains as worthy of following than the example of Jesus as the master communicator. Examining and incorporating His examples most certainly will improve efforts to communicate. It would be careless for one to dismiss or fail to realize the value of following His model. Jesus's use of the parables serves as a priceless example of effective communication. Every message that He delivered to a multitude or interaction that He had on any level highlights that He was the master communicator. He remains the supreme example for communicating His message and building His Kingdom. Undeniably, His impact and influence have proven lasting and powerful. Those whom He calls to proclaim His message must more fully explore and more closely embrace both His message and His methods. With great care but dangerous abandon must communicators earnestly seek and fervently labor to become more effective in sharing His message.⁸⁰

The Apostles Speak

The disciples had a front row view of all that Jesus taught and did. This mix of individuals found themselves unawares in a remarkably unique and historic role. It remains doubtful that they fully realized what they participated in until, perhaps, after the

⁷⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 249.

⁸⁰ Keener, 2 Tim. 2:15.

Resurrection. Wittingly and unwittingly, they benefited from observing not only what Jesus taught but how He interacted with humanity. They saw His facial expressions and tone of voice (Mark 10:21).⁸¹ They watched Him patiently minister to the masses, pushing the bounds of exhaustion, driven by a brand of compassion seemingly from another world. They noted how He often withdrew by himself to pray (Luke 5:16). They remained privy to the unfolding drama as the plan of redemption came to consummation. They walked, talked, and ate with the Lamb of God, who would give His life for the sins of humankind. They followed this teacher who embodied everything that He taught. The full significance of what Jesus said and did, however, likely could not be altogether appreciated until after the events of His death and resurrection.⁸² These fishers of men would soon take on a role beyond comprehension:

In the earliest period, Jesus labored single-handed: His miraculous deeds were confined for the most part to a limited area, and His teaching was in the main of an elementary character. But by the time the Twelve were chosen, the work of the kingdom had assumed such dimensions as to require organization and division of labor; and the teaching of Jesus was beginning to be of a deeper and more elaborate nature, and His gracious activities were taking on ever-widening range.⁸³

Little did the disciples know that in each moment they undertook preparations to change the world. The greater purpose for calling the disciples was beginning to become evident.

⁸¹ Kendig Brubaker Cully, “The Ministry—A Teaching Ministry,” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Practical Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967), 414.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Bruce Alexander Balmain, *The Training of the Twelve* (New York: Hardpress, 2013), iv.

Teachers

These first disciples not only received Jesus's teachings, but they taught others in turn (Luke 10:1-11). Mark's Gospel reports that "He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" (3:14). He gave them power over unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of sickness and disease (Matt. 10:1). After the whole ordeal and demise of Judas Iscariot, Matthias filled his place as a disciple (Acts 1:26). God gave these twelve a place of special distinction, one central to the fledgling Christian Church. They carried an authority given to them by Christ (Matt. 16:19; 28:16-20). This group of disciples began to become known as apostles, an elite group that Saul of Tarsus later joined. At Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, Jesus himself commissioned him as an apostle sent to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:12, 16).⁸⁴

The apostles' role in the history of redemption remains unique and unrepeatable.⁸⁵ God uniquely authorizes the Twelve and entrusts them with the gospel of the Kingdom as commissioned and empowered to represent Him (Matt. 16:18; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:20).⁸⁶ Herman Ridderbos notes the disciples' role in redemptive history: "They not only received revelation but were also the bearers and organs of revelation, their primary and most important task was to function as the foundation of the church. To that revelation, Christ binds His church for all time, upon it He founds and builds His church."⁸⁷ The

⁸⁴ Allen C. Myers, "Apostles," in *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 67.

⁸⁵ Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), 12.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

importance of this role cannot be understated; however, another aspect of the apostles' role carries great significance—authority.

Authorized Witnesses

The authority that relates to what and how the apostles communicated on Christ's behalf stems from Divine authority. This authority forms the heart of the apostles' message. What they had seen and heard had vitally changed the apostles.⁸⁸ The healing of the lame beggar at the gate of the temple created no small stir. The apostles Peter and John addressed a massive crowd that gathered, preaching a strong message recounting the people's rejection of Jesus and how they had killed the author of life, but God had raised Him from the dead. They assert that "to this we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15). As witnesses, they are commissioned by Jesus to testify of the Resurrection.⁸⁹ They proceed to call the people to repent and turn to God. This message alone results in about five thousand of the crowd becoming believers that day. Here the apostles, like Jesus, have just had an astonishing impact on their audience.

As Peter and John spoke, the religious leaders seize and arrest them because of their great annoyance of them teaching the people and proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. The next day, Peter and John were brought before these leaders to account for how this healing took place. Peter boldly and directly points to the power in the name of a crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ of Nazareth: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and

⁸⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 2:177.

⁸⁹ John D. Barry et al., *Faith-life Study Bible*, Acts 3:15.

they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say” (Acts 4:13-14, NIV). The hostile audience became astonished by what they heard and observed.

Fearing the crowd and citing the undeniable sign evident to all, the leaders warned them to no longer speak or teach in the name of Jesus. The apostles’ response to this remains significant: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20, ESV). The courage and clarity with which Peter and John present themselves before this inimical distinguished group of leaders, along with their resolve that nothing would deter them from continuing to do so, directly ties to what they had seen and heard.⁹⁰ They were not merely obediently carrying out a commission Jesus had given them or paying homage to His legacy; what they had seen and heard had now so gripped their hearts and minds that nothing could dissuade them from continuing to preach the good news. What they had seen and heard had forever altered them.⁹¹

The apostles’ experience and their message remained vitally connected, resulting in a unique authority: “The material authority of the New Testament originates in the history of redemption in another respect. For the communication and transmission of what was seen and heard in the fullness of time, Christ established a formal authority structure to be the source and standard for all preaching of the gospel.”⁹² The apostles

⁹⁰ Lenski, 173.

⁹¹ John Peter Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Acts* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 73.

⁹² Riddebos, 14.

carried this unique authority in addition to the authority given to them from Christ himself. They had a knowledge and a set of experiences no one else could ever have. They had closely and personally seen the incarnate Son of God, the Savior of the world (Acts 10:39-41). God appointed the apostles as witnesses, giving them authorization like no other to verify and to carry this testimony to the world.⁹³

Individuals With Power of Attorney

The office of apostle carries unique significance in its expression. The term derives from the Jewish legal system. Under the apostolate system, the apostle had full legal authority to represent another individual.⁹⁴ This reflects a similar arrangement in the contemporary American legal system in which one has the power of attorney to represent and act on behalf of another individual. Like the power of attorney, the apostle, or *shaliach*, was to be treated and received as the person represented.⁹⁵ Under this arrangement, to receive an apostle meant receiving the person who sent the apostle. Therefore, in the Jewish culture, the office of apostle carried great meaning and weight.

This remains significant in that the term *apostle* originates from the culture they endeavored to reach and therefore was already understood by the Jews as one fully authorized to represent another.⁹⁶ In the general sense, the term also refers to both the mission and the representational authority of someone sent on a mission by a superior. In

⁹³ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 14.

Christianity, an apostle refers to the authoritative mission conferred by Christ on His disciples, one that distinguishes the Twelve and later other specific people to continue His mission on earth after His resurrection and ascension.⁹⁷

Jesus adapts and overlays this structure regarding His apostles: “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me” (Matt. 10:40; John 13:20). With the same concept in mind, Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, I also am sending you” (John 20:21). In other words, the apostles remained the sole authorized representatives of the gospel of the Kingdom, appointed by Jesus himself. Called, sent, and empowered by Jesus, the apostles became part of “the rock, the foundation and the pillars of the church”⁹⁸ (Matt. 16:18; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:20). The apostles served as the bridge to ensure the purity, power and cohesion of the Kingdom message, making way for the inherent authority of the gospel to be intact for all who would in time be sent to declare this good news.

Holy Spirit Enabled Spokespersons

Ridderbos notes that the Holy Spirit played an important role in the work of the apostles: “The apostolate is not only the object of the divine counsel of redemption and the group representative of Jesus Christ, but it also has the Holy Spirit as its author. The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to do their job.”⁹⁹ The apostles witnessed the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They even interacted with Him post-

⁹⁷ Daniel G. Reid, et al., “Apostolate,” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), Logos Bible Software.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

resurrection for nearly six weeks as He further instructed them concerning the kingdom of God. A resurrected Jesus no doubt answered many questions and connected the dots for His designated representatives (Acts 1:3). He instructed them to wait for the endowment of power, via the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This heavenly presence and power would enable them to effectively be His witnesses (Acts 1:4-8). The apostles, commissioned by the risen Lord, empowered by His Spirit, preached their message as the very Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13).¹⁰⁰

As the apostles preached their message and always emphasized content, they spoke as the voice of the living God.¹⁰¹ As a result, the word preached by Paul and the others proved effectual: “This efficacy is not due to the talents of the preachers, but the secret lies in the genitive: it is the Word of God.”¹⁰² Certainly the Word of God remains central to the success of the message, yet preachers must also have some degree of ability as a communicator. They must give themselves to developing their skills. The apostles and early Christians, as God’s representatives, proclaimed His Word. The message came from God and carried His authority and pledge, as though God himself was speaking through these messengers.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Sinclair B. Ferguson and J. I. Packer, “The Anointed Prophet,” in *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 476.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 528.

¹⁰³ Alexander and Rosner, 849.

In the Book of Acts and in the Epistles, the emphasis shifts, however, from the Word through Jesus to the Word about Jesus.¹⁰⁴ After the Resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit, Jesus himself constitutes the main content of the apostolic proclamation.¹⁰⁵ This becomes the word preached by the apostles and the Early Church.¹⁰⁶ For the Early Church, the message they preached is no longer about the Kingdom but the King. They preach about Christ crucified and raised, the Lord of all (1 Cor. 1:23; 15:12; 2 Cor. 4:5).¹⁰⁷

Paul, in Particular

Perhaps the most notable and important apostle was Paul. Writing approximately two-thirds of the New Testament, Paul's letters to the Early Church helped to formulate and codify the Christian faith and became part of the foundation for orthodox Christian theology.¹⁰⁸ Paul was certainly the most influential leader in the early days of the Christian Church. Traveling through Europe and Asia Minor on numerous missionary journeys, Paul remained the one primarily responsible for bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.¹⁰⁹ Before his conversion, Saul of Tarsus, as he was then known, worked

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ferguson, 527.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander.

¹⁰⁷ R. H. Mounce, "Kerygma," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W Bromiley, rev. ed. (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 8.

¹⁰⁸ Hans Dieter Betz, "Paul (Person)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 186.

¹⁰⁹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Paul, The Apostle," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1621.

zealously to preserve and protect the religious traditions of his forefathers. As an orthodox Jew and Pharisee he took it upon himself to persecute the Christian Church (Gal. 1:13, 23; Phil. 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:9).¹¹⁰

Paul's Conversion

Acts 9 reports the story of Paul's conversion to Christianity. Paul recounts his conversion numerous other times, giving the details of his interaction with a post-resurrected, post-ascended theophany with Jesus, which remains vitally important to his unique conversion and call (Acts 22:6-11; 26:12-19). Having been present and giving approval to the stoning of Stephen, Acts records that Saul began to wreak havoc and destroy the Church, going house to house and dragging off men and women to prison (8:3). Raging on, he began a trip to Damascus to pursue Christians who had fled there. As he approached Damascus, a light flashed and a voice said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" The speaking voice identified himself as "Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (9:1-5). Temporarily blinded by "a light from heaven, brighter than the sun," as Paul describes it, he follows the Lord's instructions and travels to Damascus, where for three days he waits for further instructions (26:13). There he waits without sight and without eating or drinking. A disciple named Ananias then receives a supernatural vision to go to Paul to speak to him, restore his sight, and baptize him. After this, brother Saul spends several days with the disciples in Damascus whom he had previously sought to destroy (9:6-19).

¹¹⁰ Betz, 187.

So dramatic and impactful was Paul's conversion that it serves as the center and foundation of his early interactions and preaching. Paul notes that he received a direct call from the Lord Jesus himself, who appeared to him to make him a special minister and witness (Acts 26:16). Consequently, Paul maintains from the beginning that his apostolic commission came from the risen Lord and without the mediation of the Jerusalem apostles.¹¹¹ Significant and indispensable to Paul's qualification for apostleship was that he "saw the Lord" (9:5; 22:14; 1 Cor. 9:1). As an eyewitness who personally interacts with Jesus, Paul receives the unique qualifying right to the apostolate. As such, Paul regularly introduces himself as an apostle in his letters to the believers (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1).

Called to Preach

Beyond Paul's apostolic call, he clearly asserts that his mission was to preach: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17). "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (9:16). His letters do not reveal the sermons he preached. Instead, he uses the letters to remind the churches of what he preached when he visited with them: "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached you the gospel" (15:1).¹¹² Such statements would usually summarize the gospel as the essence of his sermon to them. In general, Paul would review that Jesus died for people's sins, was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and has appeared to his

¹¹¹ F. F. Bruce, "Paul the Apostle," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed. (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979-1988), 711.

¹¹² Fred B. Craddock, "Preaching," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 452-453.

followers, to which Paul would include himself (vv. 3-8).¹¹³ In addition to Paul validating his apostleship to his audience, he preached the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the heart of his life, his message, and his preaching (Gal. 6:14-17; 2 Cor. 4:10-11).

As Paul accepted and lived out his call and commission to preach, he passes on the task to preach to God's ministers. He charges Timothy, "Preach the Word, ... in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). The authoritative voice of Paul as an apostle of God passes the imperative to preach. Preaching does not exist as an invention of the Church or some creative technique of communication developed by the Early Church. Rather, it remains a commanded function of the ministers of the Church that Jesus established.¹¹⁴

Teaching and Preaching

At the time Jesus began His public ministry, readings from the Law and the Prophets comprised worship in the Jewish synagogues. A teaching sermon or discourse typically followed, which was predominantly a commentary on the readings. When Jesus delivered His first sermon in the synagogue, He read from Isaiah and then proceeded to announce that He had fulfilled this good news. Indeed, Isaiah had spoken about Him. Jesus proclaimed, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). Much of Jesus's ministry involved strong proclamation, announcing the kingdom of God and

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Albert Mohler, "Why Do We Preach? A Foundation for Christian Preaching, Part One," Albert Mohler, accessed October, 12, 2016, <http://albertmohler.com/2005/12/15/why-do-we-preach-a-foundation-for-christian-preaching-part-one/>.

commissioning His followers (Matt. 28:20; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43; 9:2; 10:9). Through these dramatic decrees, Jesus is not only a prophet but is also seen as a herald preacher.¹¹⁵

Jesus not only used bold proclamation preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, but as previously discussed, He also told stories and parables. Drawing His listeners in with these narratives, He effectively and memorably taught the people. He masterfully connected with everyone in the audience on their level of understanding. Jesus could read the situation, assess His onlookers, and determine the best manner of communicating with them, whether by preaching, teaching, or some other means.

Several passages document that Jesus used both preaching and teaching. For example, “One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up” (Luke 20:1). Matthew records the same (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). Jesus, the model communicator, used a combination of both preaching and teaching throughout His ministry. This distinction does not endorse preaching or teaching over the other as the most effective form of ministry communication. Instead, the point remains that God gives both preaching and teaching as extraordinary means for God to speak through humankind.

Scripture often seems to show preaching and teaching working in tandem, almost interchangeably: “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus” (Acts 5:42). This same phrase appears later in Acts when “Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord” (15:35). The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and

¹¹⁵ Haddon Robinson and Craig B. Larson, *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 64-65.

instructed him to “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). Robert Mounce cites various parallel passages in the Synoptics to demonstrate that what one Gospel terms “preaching,” the others will, at times, term “teaching” (Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44).¹¹⁶ While preaching and teaching certainly can operate independently of one another, they often do work together. Some ministers seem obviously more of a teacher than a preacher, while others prove the opposite. Much of this remains a matter of style, preparation, personal background, and setting, among other variables. The entire New Testament stresses the need for the spoken word as the means of proclaiming and spreading the good news, whether preaching or teaching.¹¹⁷ Preaching and teaching hold a variety of functions, including kerygma and didache.

Kerygma

Throughout the New Testament, more than thirty different verbs denote the function and activity of preaching.¹¹⁸ Preaching plays an important role in the Old Testament and often serves as the mode in which God delivers prophetic messages of direction, warning, or judgment. The New Testament exists as the result of preaching. The Gospels and the Epistles are fully kerygmatic.¹¹⁹ This Greek word comes from the noun *kerygma*, which implies that the gospel is a royal proclamation and the preacher is

¹¹⁶ Mounce, 8.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, 1105.

¹¹⁸ Ferguson, 528.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 528.

an official messenger. The *kerygma* remains the message of the king's messenger.¹²⁰

Such language elevates the value and approach to such a royal subject and task.

Edmund Clowney, in his writings concerning *kerygma* and the authority of preaching, does not shy away from expressing his displeasure at other activities that try to pass themselves off as preaching:

The kerygma is the message of the King's herald. It describes the work of the preacher in apostolic contrast to jovial flippancy, high-flown speculation, sentimental gush, moralistic nagging, and a dozen other abuses of the pulpit. Nor can it be applied readily to such sermon substitutes as book reviews, interpretive dancing, panel discussions, feature movies, or baptized vaudeville.¹²¹

Kerygma places great authority on the activity of preaching as a royal proclamation.

The Apostle Paul uses kerygma often to signify the act of preaching (1 Cor. 2:4; Titus 1:3), the content of preaching (1 Cor. 1:21; 15:14; 16:25), and the office of preaching (2 Tim. 4:17).¹²² Ultimately, all nuances of this important Greek word point to the proclamation of the great redemptive works of God through Jesus Christ being made known to humankind.¹²³

Didache

Closely related to *kerygma* is the word *didache*. This term refers to teaching based on the proclamation of the *kerygma*.¹²⁴ Those who have responded to the gospel

¹²⁰ Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1979), 20.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²² Ridderbos, 50-51.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²⁴ Cully, 414.

proclamation and received salvation through Jesus Christ need instruction on how to live this new life in the present world. As evidenced throughout Paul's writings, *didache* and *kerygma* remain vitally intertwined.¹²⁵ Almost always, the *didache* derives from the *kerygma*.¹²⁶ It is important to differentiate this use of *didache* from the historic manual also referred to as the *Didache*. The *Didache*, also known as the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, was an early Christian text dating to the first or second century AD containing instructions about moral conduct and liturgy. It is viewed as noncanonical, yet was highly regarded in the Early Church.¹²⁷

The Greek term *didasko* means to actively teach.¹²⁸ For instance, in Paul's ministry, the city of Corinth had heard and responded to the proclamation of the gospel, leading Paul to stay for one and a half years "teaching" [*didaskon*] the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11). This word also appears when Paul told the Christians at Rome that the words of the Old Testament Scriptures were written for their instruction or teaching (*didaskalian*, Rom. 15:4). Further, Paul writes to Timothy that "all Scripture" is "profitable for teaching" (*didaskalian*, 2 Tim. 3:16). Each of these references to teaching come from the root word *didache*.¹²⁹ This word has a well-established, broad semantic range in the New Testament.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Ibid., 415.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Shawn J. Wilhite, "Didache," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

¹²⁸ William D. Mounce, "Teach," in *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 708.

¹²⁹ Grudem, 1061.

The practices of preaching (*kerygma*) and teaching (*didache*) accompany other vital aspects to produce the desired end. When Paul visited Thessalonica, he gave a supreme effort to impact his audience by ensuring they understood his message: “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ’” (Acts 17:2-3). Luke uses three different Greek words in this passage to describe the methods and efforts expended by Paul.

First, the word translated as “reasoned” in Acts 17:3 is the Greek word *dialegomai*. Preaching and teaching provide the context for this compound word made up of a preposition meaning “through” (*dia*) and a verb meaning “to speak” (*anoigo*).¹³¹ Paul’s approach centered on speaking through the Scriptures. It implies not just reading them, but expounding on them.¹³²

Second, Paul endeavors to explain the Word of God to the people. This translation of explaining comes from the Greek word *diagiog*, which also contains the preposition “through” (*dia*) but in this instance, combines with the verb “to open” (*anoigo*).¹³³ This means to explain, to open up, or to make evident.¹³⁴ This would require prior

¹³⁰ G. P. Hugenberger, “Preach,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 940–943.

¹³¹ Mounce, “Reason,” 561.

¹³² Williams.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 404.

understanding and knowledge on Paul's part, no doubt the result of study and revelation. Further, the act of explaining in this way would necessitate Paul taking time and using compelling teaching methods as he explained the Scriptures to his audience.

As Paul reasons and explains the Scriptures, he now ventures to prove that Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. Here Luke uses a third Greek word, *paratithēmi*, which means to place alongside, to establish evidence to show that something is true.¹³⁵ This word has a legal connotation depicting a lawyer at work in a court of law laying out evidence to support a case.¹³⁶

Paul's epistles largely consist of the repetition and explanation of Scripture and teaching on how to apply it to the hearers. This, of course, includes the teachings of Jesus and the doctrines of the apostles, which both carry canonical authority.¹³⁷ Paul directed Timothy to take the teachings he had received and commit them to those who could also teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). Those who learned from the apostles also taught, and their teachings guided and directed the establishment and growth of local churches.¹³⁸ God continues to use people to speak to people. At this point in redemptive history, God's people carry His message and authority in a broader context than just the prophets and the apostles.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 672.

¹³⁶ Williams.

¹³⁷ Hugenberger, 943.

¹³⁸ Grudem, 1062.

The Issue of Authority

Jesus taught with authority: “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29). The authority evident in His teaching obviously differed from the teaching of the scribes. The crowd’s amazement with Jesus’s teaching came from their ability to clearly discern between Jesus’s authoritative teaching and that which characterized the scribes (v. 29).¹³⁹ This authority, or *exousia*, first appears in His teachings and in His deeds as He worked miracles and cast out evil spirits. He later transferred this authority to His disciples (Matt. 10:1).¹⁴⁰ Authority in which Jesus operated provides the common theme that unites both the block of teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and the stories of miracles in Matthew 8 and 9.¹⁴¹

As authority became the noticeable and verbalized difference, the scribes began to challenge Him over His authority (Mark 2:6-7).¹⁴² No doubt the content and delivery of Jesus’s message remained undeniably astonishing, but the higher issue that seemed to emerge centered on authority.

A survey of speaking throughout the Scriptures reveals the element of authority, as shown by the Old Testament prophets and the apostles as they taught.¹⁴³ God’s words,

¹³⁹ Larry Chouinard, *Matthew*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁰ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary on Matthew 1-7*, ed. Helmut Koester, rev. ed., *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 398.

¹⁴¹ Roger L. Hahn, *Matthew: A Commentary for Bible Students* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), 81.

¹⁴² Geddert, 47.

¹⁴³ Grudem, 624.

through spoken or oral communication, remain fully authoritative through a human messenger. Moses orally recounts the commands he received from God, then writes them down, and finally reads them from the book (Exod. 34:3-4). In all forms, the word he received from God and then communicates remains fully authoritative.¹⁴⁴

Even in the beginning of Jesus's public ministry, He intently shares His own power (*exousia*) with others so that this authority would take a visible, tangible shape for the foundation and extension of the Church in the world.¹⁴⁵ He commissions not merely the Twelve, but also the rank and file, every follower, to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke 24:47).¹⁴⁶ When Jesus commissions His disciples to preach the Kingdom, He invests them with His own authority as His representatives. They were to go forth with miracle working power as well as a servant's attitude (Matt. 10:8-10).¹⁴⁷

It seems that Jesus imparts this authority to those committed to fully following Him, intent on properly and purely conveying His message, and moved by compassion for the people He came to save. Just as this authority sets Jesus apart, it also sets apart ministers today. Hearers can clearly discern such authority, just as Jesus's audience did.

¹⁴⁴ Alexander and Rosner, 850.

¹⁴⁵ Ridderbos, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Hugenberger, 943.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 943; Grudem, 624.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander and Rosner, 850.

¹⁴⁷ Ridderbos, 13.

¹⁴⁷ Hugenberger, 943.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 943.

Originality was not highly prized in Jesus's day, but authority was.¹⁴⁸ Underneath the glitz and drama that sometimes accompanies the presentation of the message today, authority still sets the message and messenger apart.

What Is at Stake

God's message to people throughout the ages centers on His desire to seek relationship with humanity. This relationship remains possible through God's Son, Jesus Christ. Much of the message pointed to the coming of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior of humankind. In due time, the message was not simply about Jesus or even His teachings; Jesus himself became the message. The message ultimately presents Jesus as the Word.

Paul's letter to the Romans unfolds a pivotal passage:

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15).

Indeed, God's message to humankind comes down to this: "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"—the culmination of all He has spoken and set in motion.

Paul then asks a series of questions that reveal a vital progression that every presenter of God's message must keep in focus. Before anyone calls on the name of the Lord, they must first believe in Him and His desire and power to save. There exists no chance of belief if they never hear this message. For them to hear, however, someone

¹⁴⁸ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 533.

must proclaim this message. Finally, these who preach or proclaim must be sent. Faith will come to people if they hear and accept the message of the Word of God.

Conversely, when those sent proclaim the gospel, someone will hear the message proclaimed. As they hear the message proclaimed, the opportunity comes for them to believe. If they believe, they can call on the name of the Lord and be saved. Glaringly important to this entire process is the act of proclamation. The proclamation or presenting of this good news must remain strong, clear, and engaging.

To illustrate, one could say that whoever catches a football in the end zone scores a touchdown, but if players do not realize a pass is intended for them, they will not know to catch the ball. They will only know about the pass if someone gets their attention and tells them the play. The key to a successful pass depends on two issues. First, the quarterback must call the right play, speak clearly in the huddle, and keep the focus on the play. Second, the quarterback needs to throw a good and catchable pass. Likewise, the preacher must act like a good quarterback by simply and clearly communicating the play and accurately passing the message to the intended receiver. Communication remains essential for success.

Ineffective preaching inhibits God's message, jeopardizing the relationship He desires with humans. As important as sound doctrine, great programs, nice buildings, and integrity in finances and character might be, only one issue demands priority—effective communication. This remains the most important skill a leader must possess. Further, for Christian leaders and ministers of the gospel, the stakes of effective communication remain even higher due to the life-giving, life-changing impact possible in hearing the

gospel. The Kingdom cannot afford the surfeit of marginal communicators and presenters of the gospel.

The teachings of Jesus remain the greatest teachings ever uttered on this earth. Jesus not only taught these truths and principles, He also modeled the most important methods of effective communication. Whether He spoke to an individual or taught a massive crowd, He effectively connected and communicated with His audience. Obviously then, the wise path to improvement entails learning from the Master. By observing and highlighting several of the methods incorporated by Jesus, virtually anyone can improve as a communicator. The Roman officer answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46). These words still hold true, placing Jesus as the master communicator.

Conclusion

The unfolding redemptive history in the Scriptures demonstrates how God speaks to humankind and uses humankind to speak for God. Scriptures illustrate that the one who speaks for God must do so with the greatest of care. God does not tolerate people misrepresenting His heart and intent by miscommunicating His words, nor does He take kindly to those who convey His truths in ineffective or confusing ways.

God used a variety of individuals—the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles—to communicate His message, but Jesus, the Son of God, stands tall above all others as the standard for speaking for God. The authority with which Jesus spoke and taught astonished His listeners. While this authority remains vested in who Jesus is and why He came to earth, He modeled numerous teaching methods and characteristics that communicators can learn and emulate. Such methods include Jesus’s favorite mode of teaching—parables. Coupling these stories with strategic questioning and intentional

connections, compassion, an awareness of His audience, and engagement, He communicated His message in an interesting, memorable, and forceful way. Indeed, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46 NKJV), and because of this, Jesus remains the Master Communicator.

CHAPTER 3: GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

From the playground to the boardroom, it seems that those who communicate best are given the license to lead. Good communication skills remain vital to effective leadership, especially for ministers preaching the Word of God. While strong communication skills may come naturally to some, fortunately for others, these skills remain discernable and learnable. There exist generally accepted attributes and competencies of what makes one an effective communicator, but given the value and the potential life-changing impact preaching can have, preachers must give preparation and practice premium time and effort. Knowing how to connect with the audience becomes not only the goal, but the duty of the effective minister.

The messages that have resounded throughout history are ones people can hear, feel, and live. No one wants to listen to a preacher who does not practice what he or she preaches (ethos). Likewise, no one wants to listen to a preacher who does not feel the message (pathos). Neither does a person want to listen to a preacher who fumbles with words or makes no sense (logos). A sermon summarizes a preacher's character, passion, and words. In this way, ethos, pathos, and logos inform the preacher's preparation. Such preparation goes beyond a few hours or days prior to the preached sermon. This preparation is, in fact, a lifestyle. This chapter will present an overview of essential elements that help to make one an informed and effective communicator, who can prepare with focus, deliver with clarity, and speak with power.

The Need to Communicate Well

Good leaders can communicate, but “great leaders communicate well.”¹ Vital to effective leadership is effective communication. Though good communication remains a component of good leadership, leaders do not necessarily possess these skills.

Communication has many variables, and leaders must acquire, develop, and improve upon these skills. Communication coach and author Carmine Gallo notes that in her twenty-five years of studying communication, “I’ve learned that great speakers are great because they’re never satisfied. They are constantly looking for ways to improve in the art of public speaking.”² Successfully conveying a message begins with recognizing the importance of communication skills.

Public speaking, whether preaching from a pulpit or making a presentation in a boardroom, provides the means through which one presents an argument or transmits a message. Unfortunately, if an individual’s public speaking skills lack efficacy, the audience will fail to focus and receive the message.³ Gerald Ford, the thirty-eighth president of the United States, avowed that if he “went back to college again, I’d concentrate on two areas: learning to write and to speak before an audience. Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively.”⁴ Ford understood that

¹ James T. Bradford, *Lead So Others Can Follow: 12 Practices and Principles for Ministry* (Springfield, MO: Salubris Resources, 2015), 1172, Kindle.

² Carmine Gallo, “7 Advanced Presentation Tips to Become a Great Public Speaker,” *Forbes*, July 23, 2014, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2014/07/22/7-advanced-presentation-tips-to-become-a-great-public-speaker/#4c38698c57b4>.

³ Peter Khoury, “The Top 9 Characteristics of Effective Public Speakers,” *Magnetic Speaking*, accessed August 9, 2017, <https://magneticspeaking.com/the-top-9>.

⁴ Mary Ellen Guffey, *Mary Ellen Guffey’s Essentials of Business Communication* (Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western, 2007), 2.

the ability of the audience to understand the information that one relays remains the main target of any public speaking.⁵ Audiences need a worthwhile message. Consequently, one must learn to communicate well. As Teresa Erickson duly notes, “It’s impossible to change the world all by yourself. To have an impact, you need to communicate.”⁶ The ability to communicate effectively proves vital in every setting and endeavor, whether in society, ministry, or business.

In many organizations, the rubric of criteria required for an individual to get promoted often goes beyond what an organization may publish or prescribe. An article in the *Harvard Business Review* asserts that “the number one criteria for advancement and promotion for professionals is an ability to communicate effectively.”⁷ An individual may excel in all the understood markers of what it takes to succeed in a company yet remain overlooked for a promotion, often by someone who may not perform at the same level. This results from the unwritten, unspoken, and intuitive criteria employed by those who make such decisions. In many cases, the underlying issue concerns the ability to communicate effectively in every setting, whether making a presentation or resolving conflict among staff members.⁸ In a survey of 480 companies and organizations, communication skills ranked as the top personal quality sought by employers among

⁵ Scott Bell, *The Art of Public Speaking: Ultimate Tips and Tricks on How to Master Your Presentation* (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2016), 108-109, Kindle.

⁶ Teresa Erickson and Tim Ward, *The Master Communicator’s Handbook* (Hants, UK: John Hunt Publishing, 2015), 1, Kindle.

⁷ John Beeson, “Why You Didn’t Get That Promotion,” *Harvard Business Review*, June 2009, accessed March 3, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2009/06/why-you-didnt-get-that-promotion>.

⁸ John Beeson, *The Unwritten Rules: The Six Skills You Need to Get Promoted to the Executive Level* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 2.

college graduates.⁹ Another survey among recent college graduates in the work force found that oral communication remains the most essential skill for career advancement.¹⁰ Recognizing the value of communication skills should stir within each one the desire to improve as communicators.

The Goal of Communication

The goal of developing strong communication begins with an examination of the gift of language. Every person receives the remarkable gift of capacity for language. This gift gives each one the potential to not merely speak but to inspire or mock, promise or manipulate, pray or command, love or hate, lead or deceive, and inform or entertain. People desire others to promote good with their language, yet as history proves, such thinking remains wishful. No matter how one uses language, spoken words provide the primary means of communication.¹¹

Ultimately, when properly communicated, language impacts those who receive the message. This defines influence.¹² Influence occurs when someone affects an individual's emotions, opinions, or behaviors, which comprise social influence.¹³

⁹ Albert R. Karr, "A Special News Report about Life on the Job," *Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 1998.

¹⁰ Andrew A. Zekeri, "College Curriculum Competencies and Skills Former Students Found Essential to Their Careers," *College Student Journal*, 38 (2004): 43-44.

¹¹ Quentin J. Schultze, *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking: Serving Your Audience with Faith, Skill, and Virtue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 22-23.

¹² Dictionary.com, s.v. "impact," accessed May 23, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/impact>.

¹³ Boundless, "A Leader's Influence," Boundless, last modified May 26, 2016, accessed May 23, 2017, <https://www.boundless.com/management/textbooks/boundless-management-textbook/leadership-9/defining-leadership-68/a-leader-s-influence-340-1045/>.

Influence also defines leadership, as noted by John Maxwell: “Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”¹⁴ Leaders use influence to help move or persuade people to accomplish goals and desired objectives.¹⁵ Researcher and author Jay Conger states that effective communication requires what he calls “the necessary art of persuasion,” and values it as “the language of business leadership.”¹⁶

The ancient Greeks and Romans placed high value on the use of language, especially the practice of public speaking for the ethical means of influence. This use of public speaking for persuasion, or rhetoric as it is called, thrived in the courtrooms, assemblies, theatres, and a variety of civic functions in the Greek and Roman cultures. The term *rhetoric* has come to refer to the art of skillful public speaking. Aristotle (384-322 BC), Cicero (106-43 BC), and others helped advance rhetoric into a regarded academic and professional discipline.¹⁷

A list compiled by Michael Eidenmuller provides scholarly definitions from a number of notable rhetoricians, which reinforce the meaning and purpose of rhetoric:

Plato: Rhetoric is the “art of enchanting the soul.” (The art of winning the soul by discourse.)

Aristotle: Rhetoric is “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion.”

Cicero: Rhetoric is “speech designed to persuade.”

¹⁴ Kevin Kruse, “What Is Leadership?” *Forbes*, April 09, 2013, accessed May 23, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/print/>.

¹⁵ Boundless.

¹⁶ Jay A. Conger, *On Communication* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013), 69.

¹⁷ Schultze, 19-23.

Quintilian: “Rhetoric is the art of speaking well” or “... a good man speaking well.”

Francis Bacon: “The duty and office of rhetoric is to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will.”

George Campbell: “[Rhetoric] is that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end. The four ends of discourse are to enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passion, and influence the will.”

Henry Ward Beecher: “Not until human nature is other than what it is, will the function of the living voice—the greatest force on earth among men—cease ... I advocate, therefore, in its full extent, and for every reason of humanity, of patriotism, and of religion, a more thorough culture of oratory and I define oratory to be the art of influencing conduct with the truth set home by all the resources of the living man.”¹⁸

In addition to these definitions, rhetoric commonly refers to politics and social discourse. This form of rhetoric can sometimes have a negative connotation as it often denotes the use of argumentative language and manipulation for the purposes of pushing a certain political agenda or position. Though still a form of persuasion, it certainly yields less respect.¹⁹

The Process of Communication

Virtually any setting or event involving someone speaking to an audience typically involves seven elements: speaker, message, channel, listener, feedback, interference, and situation. While literature on the subject of communication often varies in terminology, the elements that constitute the process of speaking remain the same.

¹⁸ Michael D. Eidenmuller, “Scholarly Definitions of Rhetoric,” *American Rhetoric*, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricdefinitions.htm>.

¹⁹ M. K. David, “Language, Power, and Manipulation: The Use of Rhetoric in Maintaining Political Influence,” *Frontiers of Language and Teaching* 5, no. 1 (2014): 164-170.

Understanding these elements prove critical to effective communication.²⁰ These elements interact with the traits of the effective communicator.

The Speaker

Communication typically begins with a speaker or sender. Just as with a telephone call, text message, or a letter sent through the mail, communication begins with a sender. In the case of a speech, presentation, or sermon, the speaker initiates the communication.²¹ Within the role of the speaker do all the traits of effective communication, the elements of effective communication, and three aspects of rhetoric come to bear. Only the speaker takes responsibility for such essentials as motivation, knowledge, preparation, style of delivery, passion, and credibility—the primary and critical parts of the process of communication.²²

The Message

The second element in the process of communication concerns the message. The message constitutes the content the speaker endeavors to communicate. The message consists of a package needing delivery. The message must be well-thought and thoroughly crafted. It requires the work of research, thought, structure, refinement, preparation, and delivery, a process known as encoding, with the speaker as the

²⁰ Stephen Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 17.

²¹ Ibid., 18.

²² Bell, 187-188.

encoder.²³ Beyond the intended message, the speaker must give attention to both the intended message and what one actually communicates, that which one communicates beyond intent. Awareness of both depends on the verbal message (what one says) as well as the nonverbal message (how one says it).²⁴

The Channel

Channel serves as the third element in the communication process. Channel simply refers to the method or means by which one communicates the message. This often refers to some electronic means of communication, such as a telephone call or a speech broadcast on television. Standing in front of an audience to give any type of presentation also represents the concept of channel.²⁵

The Listener

The listener comes as the next vital link in the process of communication. The listener is the individual or group who receives the message. Without the listener, no communication occurs.²⁶ While the listener can do much to enhance the communication experience, ultimately, the speaker bears the lion share of responsibility to enhance the process and maximize communication. For example, the speaker must know the audience and craft the message and the delivery to best connect with that audience. For example,

²³ Boundless. "Speaker," Boundless, February 27, 2017, June 16, 2017, <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/introduction-to-public-speaking-1/elements-of-speech-communication-21/speaker-96-10668/>.

²⁴ Lucas, 18.

²⁵ Ibid., 18-19.

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

one would never present a marriage and relationship seminar to preschoolers. For effective communication to occur, the speaker must remain audience-centric. The speaker must always prepare every aspect with the audience in mind.

The Feedback

Feedback forms the fifth element in the communication process. This consists of the cues and clues, usually non-verbal, that the audience signals when they receive or fail to receive the message from the speaker. The audience sends feedback and signals in a number of ways: facial expressions, posture, applaud, laughs, looks of boredom, clock watching, and tuning out to play games or engage on social media. For the most part, perception rather than a measurable tangible indicates positive and negative feedback.²⁷ The speaker must constantly read and assess feedback and adjust to keep the audience engaged. The effective communicator remains highly skilled at sensing and adapting to feedback. Feedback also relates to the issue of attention spans, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Interference

Interference, the sixth element, refers to noise. Interference denotes anything that hinders the communication of the intended message. It behaves like static noise on a phone call, making conversation difficult or impossible to have. This same idea illustrates the problem that can occur while the speaker endeavors to communicate to the listener or the audience. This interference or noise can happen either internally or externally, for both the speaker and audience. Interference can range from a crying baby to someone

²⁷ Ibid.

nearby who wears too much perfume, from a too hot or cold room, to a lawn crew mowing and edging close to the building while the meeting takes place.

The Situation

Situation or setting constitutes the last piece of the communication process.²⁸ Also known as context, situation simply refers to the physical location where the communication occurs, such as a church, an apartment, an office, a sports field, a noisy restaurant, or even a store.²⁹ People tend to communicate differently in different places, illustrating the importance of context. A set of unwritten rules of communication or norms dictate how these settings affect one's communication.³⁰ For example, a speaker would use a certain manner of communication on a sports field and a drastically different one for church. The speaker must also remain aware of the importance of situation within the communication process.

The Speaker's Responsibility

The speaker must fully understand the process of communication and each of its elements in the same way a pilot must understand the control panel, flight instruments, and principles of navigation. Without such understanding, a pilot could never back away from the gate, let alone take off and reach a destination. The attributes of effective communication find their application and emphasis within the principles of persuasion

²⁸ Bell, 270.

²⁹ Lisa Schreiber and Morgan Hartranft, "Introduction to Public Speaking," The Public Speaking Project, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://publicspeakingproject.org/PDF%20Files/Introduction%20web%201%20gs.pdf>.

³⁰ Ibid.

and the process of communication—this intersection is where the difference between good and poor communication lies. A commitment for intentional application and effort toward these ends falls solely on the speaker.

The Principles of Persuasion

Aristotle first described the principles of persuasion in his treatise *Rhetoric*. Aristotle, as well as other ancient rhetoricians, placed great emphasis on three critical elements that comprise good communication: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos refers to credibility, while pathos relates to the emotions, and logos addresses reason. To this day, these three elements remain vital ingredients for communicators.³¹

Ethos

Ethos is both stated and sensed. It yields credibility, which gives people a reason to believe the speaker. Stated ethos comes through knowing the speaker's qualifications, education, and experience. This gives the audience some confidence that the speaker knows the content. An introduction or written biography detailing the speaker's background, such as one's academic degrees or experience as a service veteran, helps develop ethos. The audience can also sense ethos as they discern the knowledge and integrity of the speaker, giving credibility to both the speaker and the subject being presented.³² Ken Davis explains the relationship between ethos and ethics: "Ethos, which gives us the word ethics, refers to the moral character and passionate belief at the source

³¹ Greg Scharf and Bryan Chapell, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: Strategies for Overcoming Bottlenecks in Preaching God's Word* (Phillipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 2015), 198.

³² Scott Edinger, "Three Elements of Great Communication, According to Aristotle," *Harvard Business Review*, January 17, 2013, 3.

of a communicator's ability to persuade. Trusted and respected individuals are more easily believed than those who do not demonstrate with their lives what they are trying to communicate.”³³ Long-time White House press corps member Helen Thomas notes what happens when ethos disappears from the communication equation: “I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern once people had decided they had no credibility.”³⁴ The value of ethos should never be underestimated as it reflects one's authenticity and influences one's non-verbal communication, which often speaks louder than words.

Authenticity

Effective communication depends on three main parts: the “what,” the “how,” and the “who.” The what consists of the content of what one communicates. The how deals with the delivery of the message. While these first two seem obvious and need emphasis, the who remains just as critical—the life and character of the person delivering the message.³⁵ Does the speaker's life reflect the espoused message? Is there duplicity between the public life in front of an audience and one's personal life? The answers to such questions rest on authenticity and speaks one's ethos. If the audience perceives a lack of authenticity in the speaker, the message stands in grave peril; the audience will

³³ Ken Davis and Michael S. Hyatt, *Secrets of Dynamic Communication: Prepare with Focus, Deliver with Clarity, Speak with Power* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2013), 142.

³⁴ Helen Thomas, *Front Row at the White House: My Life and Times* (New York: Scribner, 2006), 74.

³⁵ Brandon Hilgemann, *Preach and Deliver: Captivate Your Audience, Kill Bad Habits, and Master the Art of Sermon Delivery* (Amazon Digital Services: 2016), 147-153, Kindle.

not receive it. This proves true in virtually any arena, from politics to the pulpit, or the car lot to the courtroom; authenticity remains essential.

Authenticity also deals with the how in that the who gets reflected in the how. During communication, numerous verbal and non-verbal signs indicate authenticity or the lack of authenticity. When authenticity lacks, the speaker appears disingenuous and less than sincere, or the audience may detect lying, which presents in the vocal inflection, forced smiles, no eye contact, too much or no movement, speaking too fast, hand to face activity, grooming gestures, or the use of clichés or pat phrases.³⁶ Signs and gestures such as these indicate the telltale signs of lack of authenticity. The audience makes an implicit or explicit decision to trust the speaker based on such signs; however, “authenticity communicates volumes,” as Andy Stanley notes, and it “covers a multitude of communication sins. If a communicator is believable and sincere, I can put up with a lot of things. But if I get the feeling that I’m listening to their stage personality, big turnoff.”³⁷ If the listeners do not trust the messenger, they will not trust the message either.

Authenticity simply means being oneself, presenting the genuine article. This makes the speaker and consequently the message highly valued. This same concept plays out in the auction arena. Customers often will refuse to bid on items advertised as valuable if they lack provenance or certified appraisals. Authenticity increases value, and customers will reject fakes: “People have built-in imposter detectors. They can spot a

³⁶ Philip Houston, Michael Floyd, and Susan Carnicero, *Spy the Lie: Former CIA Officers Show You How to Detect Deception* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2012).

³⁷ Andy Stanley and Lane Jones, *Communicating for a Change: Seven Keys to Irresistible Communication* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2006), 169, Kindle.

fake a mile away.”³⁸ Charles Spurgeon once lectured that the preacher’s life should act as a magnet, drawing people to Christ, but lamented when preachers themselves drive them away from Him.³⁹ John Stott laments, “Nothing sickens people more than deceit or hypocrisy; nothing is more attractive than sincerity. People expect high standards of honesty from preachers and sniff around like dogs after a rat to see if they can discover any contradictions in us ...Christ himself condemned hypocrites harshly.”⁴⁰ Indeed, pastors must remain authentic and live without hypocrisy.

When it comes to sharing the gospel, preachers should preach like no one else. A fine line exists between inspiration and imitation. While other speakers and preachers may inspire with their unique style, authenticity becomes lost when one tries to copy them. Even though a preacher may be sincere and free from duplicity in one’s life, imitating the delivery style of someone else comes off as a lack of authenticity.⁴¹ The famous Dr. Seuss uniquely underscores this important lesson: “Today you are you! That is truer than true! There is no one alive who is you-er than you!”⁴²

³⁸ Hilgemann, *Preach and Deliver*, 217.

³⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Second Series of Lectures to My Students; Being Addresses Delivered to the Students of the Pastors College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1906), 18.

⁴⁰ John Stott, *The Challenge of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 1297-1300, Kindle.

⁴¹ Brandon Hilgemann, *Preaching Nuts & Bolts: Conquer Sermon Prep, Save Time, and Write Better Messages* (Amazon Digital Services: 2017), 419, Kindle.

⁴² Dr. Seuss, *Happy Birthday to You!* (New York: Random House, 1987), 11.

While preachers must expend great energy to craft an impactful message, paying full attention to the what and the how, such effort remains episodic and connected to specific speaking events. The who, on the other hand, possesses greater value; without trust in the who, the what and the how simply will not matter. The effort expended on the who is not episodic; it remains continuous as the preacher nurtures, guards, and strives to grow day-by-day over the long haul.

Non-Verbal Communication

Beyond the content of a message and the words spoken, lies another important realm of communication that intimately ties to one's ethos—non-verbal communication. Those who ignore non-verbal communication risk audience retention of the content and words of the message and jeopardize audience perception of the speaker's authenticity. Non-verbal communication remains vital to verbal communication. Albert Mehrabian, who has conducted numerous studies on the subject of nonverbal communication notes that words make up only 7 percent of the exchange of communication, while 38 percent comes through certain vocal elements and 55 percent through nonverbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc.⁴³ Other studies put the nonverbal elements at 60 to 90 percent, depending on variables in individuals and settings.⁴⁴ No matter the exact percentage, nonverbal behavior remains a critical aspect of communication that deserves

⁴³ Albert Mehrabian, *Nonverbal Communication* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 1972), 108.

⁴⁴ Jeff Thompson, "Is Nonverbal Communication a Numbers Game?" *Psychology Today*, September 30, 2011, accessed July 7, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beyond-words/201109/is-nonverbal-communication-numbers-game>.

special attention.⁴⁵ Body language, such as hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions, play an immense role in effective communication. Given conflict between the verbal and nonverbal messages, audiences will often believe the non-verbal message over the verbal one.⁴⁶

God made the human body to move. A speaker who stands like a statue does not usually excite audiences. Content and passion should motivate movement as it does for a variety of professionals: “In most realms, professionals use their whole body. The conductor of a symphony, the concert pianist, the umpire, the actress, and the golfer all put their bodies into what they do. Accomplished speakers, likewise, let their bodies speak for them.”⁴⁷ Likewise, speakers must remain mindful of content, which also dictates movement. Depending on the content, some speakers may need to move less, rather than moving out of habit or learned behavior.

Gestures provide one important form of non-verbal communication. Used for expression, not exhibition, gestures such as hand movements maintain interest and hold attention. They should support the idea being shared, rather than being random and meaningless. Haddon Robinson prescribes spontaneous, definite, and varied gestures and warns against ill-timed or over-rehearsed gestures that can distract and look insincere.⁴⁸ Speakers should also avoid fidgeting and nervous, mindless movement and ticks.

⁴⁵ Blake Eastman, “How Much of Communication is Nonverbal?” Nonverbal Group, accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.nonverbalgroup.com/2011/08/how-much-of-communication-is-really-nonverbal>.

⁴⁶ Mehrabian, 108.

⁴⁷ Haddon W. Robinson. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 3048-3050, Kindle.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3084-3100.

As Teresa Erickson and Tim Ward note, body language includes gestures as well as posture and facial expressions:

Language covers everything from our posture and gestures to our facial expressions. As babies, our first language was non-verbal. We stared at and learned to read the facial expressions and gestures of those closest to us before we were able to decipher words and make our own sounds to add to our communication toolkit. We all still have programmed within us that channel that processes non-verbal communication, and that channel is constantly sending impressions about others to our conscious minds. Reinforce your message with these body-language patterns that convey your confidence and authority.⁴⁹

Indeed, a mindful approach to body language will help the audience connect more deeply to the speaker, especially if the speaker uses open body language. Erickson and Ward endorse open rather than closed body language. Open body language conveys approachability and confidence without the need to protect oneself. Closed body language gives the audience the sense that speakers lack confidence and feel the need to protect themselves, or that they are concealing something.⁵⁰

Recent research reveals advantages of practicing open body language prior to a presentation. Researchers measured subjects standing in so-called “powerful poses”—a Wonder Woman pose with legs apart and hands on hips and the Victory Pose, with fists thrust in the air and chin lifted. They found that after only two minutes, levels of the stress hormone cortisol had lowered significantly, and levels of testosterone, the hormone that gives energy and confidence, had risen. These subjects then performed dramatically better in simulated job interviews than those who had not stood in the power poses before the interviews. Similarly, when researchers had their subjects sit in “powerless poses,”

⁴⁹ Erickson and Ward, 32.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

making themselves as small as possible on chairs with arms crossed and one hand covering their necks, the opposite happened: testosterone levels plummeted, and cortisol levels shot up. These subjects did the worst in subsequent job interviews.⁵¹

Gestures used properly provide emotional and visual reinforcement to the verbal message. When gestures remain natural, the audience will not think so much about the speaker, but rather what the speaker says.⁵² While the speaker should not over-practice nonverbal movements so that they become disingenuous, one should value their importance and incorporate them as a component of effective communication, recognizing their role in testifying to one's ethos and authenticity.

Pathos

Pathos relates to the emotional connection established by the speaker with the audience. It describes the communicator's ability to touch feelings and emotionally move people.⁵³ Pathos causes people to believe that what the speaker says matters to them because it seems to truly matter to the speaker. The audience observes that the speaker has passion and enthusiasm about the subject being presented.⁵⁴ Further, pathos skillfully utilizes words and stories to demonstrate an empathetic awareness on the part of the

⁵¹ Dana R. Carney, Amy J. C. Cuddy, and Andy J. Yap, "Power Posing – Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance," *Journal of the Association for Psychological Science* (October 2010), 4.

⁵² Brad Mueller, *Public Speaking – Concise Concepts: No Stories, Just Point Form Secrets the Pro's Use!* (Amazon Digital Services: Brad Mueller, 2012), 726-727, Kindle.

⁵³ Davis and Hyatt, 142.

⁵⁴ Edinger, 3.

speaker toward the needs and feelings of the audience.⁵⁵ All things considered, pathos has the greatest influence on the audience in viewing the speaker as an effective communicator.⁵⁶ At the heart of pathos lies passion, which pathos depends on to make deep connections to the audience.

Passion

Passion, by definition, means an intense desire or enthusiasm for something.⁵⁷ Passion serves as one of the vital ingredients in effective and persuasive communication. Without passion, everything else combined will fall short. People recognize when others put their “heart into their work. No rules can take the place of that. Sincerity, enthusiasm, and deep earnestness tear down barriers that allow the real person to break free.”⁵⁸ Jules Rose goes even further asserting that “the exact words that you use are far less important than the energy, intensity, and conviction with which you use them.”⁵⁹ People do not typically move to action or change when they remain bored or complacent. Passionless communication is wasted effort. Scottish philosopher George Campbell describes the

⁵⁵ Davis and Hyatt, 143.

⁵⁶ Edinger, 4.

⁵⁷ Merriam-Webster, s.v. “passion,” accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/passion>.

⁵⁸ Robinson, 205.

⁵⁹ John Maxwell, *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2010), 117.

intimate relationship between persuasion and passion, writing, “When persuasion is the end, passion also must be engaged.”⁶⁰

Unlike other attributes, one cannot rehearse passion. Practiced passion comes off as insincere.⁶¹ Passion does not simply exist as a component of delivery, yet passion remains evident and infused in delivery. Passion relates to the subject communicated. It is hard, if not impossible for speakers to communicate passionately about a topic that they do not feel passionate about. Effective communicators are passionate about their subject, and “if the subject is not worthy of your passion, it should be distributed in a memo.”⁶² Belief generates passion, and passion persuades. The most effective messages are the ones that can be heard, felt, and lived.⁶³

Beyond passion lies desire, which springs from a personal, passionate conviction on the topic at hand. Not only must speakers communicate ideas that matter to them personally, but they must also have a deep desire to help the audience grasp and apply this truth that matters. When the speaker concentrates on these ideas and desires to help the listeners understand and accept them then “strong delivery comes naturally.”⁶⁴

While authenticity and sincerity prove vital to effective communication, especially in the preaching of God’s truths, passion goes a step further than sincerity.

⁶⁰ George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, edited by Lloyd F. Bitzer (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 77.

⁶¹ Khoury.

⁶² Ken Davis, “4 Characteristics of Effective Communicators,” Michael Hyatt, last modified May 11, 2012, accessed June 28, 2017, <https://michaelhyatt.com/4-characteristics-of-effective-communicators.html>.

⁶³ Davis and Hyatt, 142.

⁶⁴ Robinson, 204.

Sincerity is to mean what one says and does, but passion means feeling what one says. English Christian leader and Anglican cleric John Stott refers to passion as earnestness in his writings, the “deep feeling essential to preaching.”⁶⁵ Great preaching requires “great feeling,” wrote American Presbyterian minister and theologian James W. Alexander, and “it is a matter of universal observation that a speaker who would excite deep feeling must feel deeply himself.”⁶⁶ Preachers can only inspire others if they themselves are inspired. Inspired and passionate speakers always prove more interesting and engaging than bored and passive ones: “People who are genuinely passionate about their topic make better speakers. They inspire their audiences in ways that non-passionate, low-energy people fail to do.”⁶⁷ Passion or earnestness springing from belief and desire show up in undeniable ways, ones felt, seen, and heard in the speaker’s delivery.

Pastor A. R. Bernard maintains that intellectual engagement occurs through emotional engagement: “Words from the heart enter the heart. You must connect with the people emotionally in order to connect intellectually.”⁶⁸ John Stott harshly admonishes those who handle “issues of eternal life and death” as though they are “discussing the weather ... How can we deliver a solemn message in a casual manner, or refer to the eternal destinies of men and women as if we were discussing where they will spend their

⁶⁵ Stott, 1387-1391.

⁶⁶ James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 20.

⁶⁷ Carmine Gallo, *Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World’s Top Minds* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014), 27.

⁶⁸ A. R. Bernard, telephone conversation with author, June 27, 2017.

summer holidays? Christians who care are earnest.”⁶⁹ Christian ministers tasked with communicating the truths of God’s Word must do so with passion.

To inspire others, however, one must also be inspired. The nuts and bolts of effective communication remain essential, but passion provides the vital ingredient that makes the biggest impact in connecting the speaker to the listener. James Bradford sums up his goal as he preaches: “My overall goal in communicating a message is for both my ‘head’ and my ‘heart’ to come out of my mouth.”⁷⁰ What happens in the speaker impacts those who hear the message, as Scripture affirms: “The light in the eyes [of him whose heart is joyful] rejoices the hearts of others, and good news nourishes the bones” (Prov. 15:30).⁷¹ Indeed, passion’s role in pathos fuels the connection between speaker and listener, but it must also be informed by knowledge of one’s audience.

Knowledge of One’s Audience

Knowing one’s audience remains essential to sharing one’s passion. Speakers must consider this aspect from the initial stages of preparation through the delivery of the message. Knowing the audience informs the speaker on how to deliver the message. It informs the entire process of communication, as Deanna Kotrla notes: “Great communicators know exactly who will be sitting in the crowd and will tailor their message to that audience.”⁷² Ken Davis adds, “As you prepare your speech, the audience

⁶⁹ Stott, 1392-1394.

⁷⁰ Bradford, 1279-1280.

⁷¹ All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Amplified Version.

⁷² Deanna Kotrla, “6 Common Characteristics of Effective Communicators,” *Leadership*, June 10, 2013, accessed June 28, 2017, <http://www.lifeway.com/leadership/2015/11/17/6-common-characteristics-of-effective-communicators/>.

should never be far from your mind. After all, the objective you have worked so hard to develop has meaning only as it relates to the audience.”⁷³ Effective communicators understand how to read an audience and adjust as needed to make that audience want to listen. Without audience engagement, communication cannot take place.⁷⁴

The speaker must put forth the due diligence in developing an ample understanding of certain issues relating to the audience: age, language, values, culture, beliefs, setting, and disposition, noting whether the audience is friendly or hostile toward the speaker and message. These issues divide into two categories, demographic and attitudinal.⁷⁵

By knowing one’s audience, passion increases because the speaker develops empathy, as illustrated by Jesus: “When Jesus saw the crowds of people, he had compassion on them because they were helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9: 36). Jesus, being God in the flesh, didn’t just see a faceless crowd. Rather, He saw the hearts, lives, struggles, background, fears, and desires of each one. Jesus knew exactly to whom He spoke and His compassion for the people motivated His preaching.⁷⁶ Noted Scottish Presbyterian pastor and scholar James Stalker asserts that “many a preacher

⁷³ Davis and Hyatt, 86.

⁷⁴ Ken Davis, “4 Characteristics of Effective Communicators,” Michael Hyatt, last modified May 11, 2012, accessed June 28, 2017, <https://michaelhyatt.com/4-characteristics-of-effective-communicators.html>.

⁷⁵ Peter DeCaro, Tyrone Adams, and Bonnie Jefferis, “Audience Analysis,” The Public Speaking Project, accessed June 28, 2017, <http://publicspeakingproject.org/PDF%20Files/Introduction%20web%201%20gs.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Brandon Hilgemann, *Preaching Nuts & Bolts*, 249, Kindle.

misses the mark because, though he knows books, he does not know men.”⁷⁷ When speakers take the time to know their audience, they can cultivate the pathos needed for effective communication.

Stories

The use of stories, like passion and the knowledge of one’s audience, plays an integral role in developing the emotional connection needed for effective communication. A carefully chosen story can awaken an audience like few other forms of rhetoric. Even Jesus knew the power of story. The Gospel of Mark records that large crowds “enjoyed listening to Jesus teach” (Mark 12:37, CEV). The New International Version describes the crowd listening “with delight.” Jesus serves as the master communicator, so one must consider what caused the people to listen with delight and joy as He taught. This passage suggests that Jesus entertained the people to a degree. Some preachers would proudly say, “We’re not here to entertain,” yet entertaining the audience should become a goal of every speaker and certainly every preacher. The word *entertain* means capturing and holding the attention for an extended period of time, to keep a person or group of people interested or amused.⁷⁸ A sermon does not have to be dry and boring in order to be spiritual and inspiring. Truth poorly delivered is ignored; however, people will listen to foolishness if it remains interesting, as evidenced by much of the content of late night television. When someone teaches God’s Word in a boring way, people may not only think that the preacher is boring, they might think that God is boring.

⁷⁷ Wayne V. McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 148.

⁷⁸ *Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary*, s.v. “entertain,” accessed August 9, 2017, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/entertain>.

A recent survey by Gallup reveals the top reason why American adults attend church—the sermon. Programs, music, and outreach trailed sermon delivery and content. Three in four identified sermons as the major reason they attend church.⁷⁹ At the same time, a study by the Barna Group reveals irrelevancy (35 percent) and boredom (31 percent) as the top reasons why adults say church attendance is not important to them.⁸⁰

Stories can help, however. Not only was Jesus a master storyteller, but stories and parables constituted His favorite teaching technique. In fact, “he did not tell them anything without using stories” (Matt. 13:34, CEV). Statistically, out of the 146 preaching encounters of Jesus listed in the four gospels, Jesus used stories or metaphors eight-six times, or 59 percent of the time.⁸¹ Two-thirds of all the times that Jesus taught, He used story, and people listened to Him in delight. Likewise, research on contemporary speech and communication also cite the use of story as an important element not to be ignored. Current neuroscience research also substantiates the power of story as part of effective communication.

In its truest essence, to entertain means holding someone’s attention. Stories hold people’s attention, which is why television, a story-telling machine, remains popular. Even commercials tell stories. The brain is hardwired to respond to story; it takes in and retains information best when presented in story form. Curiosity triggers the

⁷⁹ Lydia Saad, “Sermon Content Is What Appeals Most to Churchgoers,” Gallup, April 14, 2017, accessed July 3, 2017, http://www.gallup.com/poll/208529/sermon-content-appeals-churchgoers.aspx?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_content=morelink&utm_campaign=syndication.

⁸⁰ David Kinnaman, *Barna Trends 2017: What’s New and What’s Next at the Intersection of Faith and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 159.

⁸¹ Douglas Witherup, *Interrobang Preaching: (re)Discovering the Communication Secrets of Jesus* (Kannapolis, NC: Interrobang Press, 2014), 236, Kindle.

neurotransmitter dopamine, which gives people a sense of pleasure. The brain's reward system pulls an individual forward through the story because of curiosity about what will happen. Stories that hold people's attention explains why people have a hard time putting down engaging books or stay up later than intended. Curiosity fuels dopamine, bringing pleasure. As television producer Lisa Cron explains, "Recent breakthroughs in neuroscience reveal that our brain is hardwired to respond to story; the pleasure we derive from a tale well told is nature's way of seducing us into paying attention to it."⁸² The curiosity-pleasure connection urges audiences to pay attention and discover what happens next in the story.

Science shows that people's brains become more active when they tell or hear a story. When experiencing a lecture or a PowerPoint presentation, for example, certain parts of the brain, the Broca's area and the Wernicke's area, activate.⁸³ These areas provide the language processing parts of the brain where words decode into meaning. In telling a story, the brain activates not only its language processing parts but a number of other areas in the brain associated with experiencing the events of the story.⁸⁴ Details and descriptions given in story form light up the sensory cortex, while descriptions of action and motion activate the motor cortex.⁸⁵ The brain links to story details, whether retellings of events or metaphors, to enable the listener to vividly connect with the story. In

⁸² Lisa Cron, *Wired for Story: The Writers Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers from the Very First Sentence* (New York: Ten Speed Press, 2012), 13-15.

⁸³ Kendall F. Haven, *Story Proof: The Science Behind the Startling Power of Story* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 1056, Kindle.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 280.

⁸⁵ Jeremy Hsu, "The Secrets of Storytelling," *Scientific American Mind* 19, no. 4 (2008): 46-51.

addition, listening to a story activates the insula, which helps the listener to relate to feelings such as pain, happiness, fear, or joy.⁸⁶ Interestingly, the brain learns to ignore certain overused words and phrases. Such words or phrases get treated simply as words rather than powerful adjectives. For example, scientists have observed that figures of speech such as “a rough day” have become so familiar that the brain treats them as regular words.⁸⁷ Certainly, preachers must note that and avoid overused phrases as they craft and convey their stories.

Both practical observation and science underscore the need for stories in effective communication. Dale Carnegie understood the power of stories to impact an audience, saying, “The great truths of the world have often been couched in fascinating stories.”⁸⁸ Stories make concepts and ideas tangible and palpable, catching and holding the audience’s curiosity and therefore their attention. Peter Gruber, film producer of such movies as *Batman* and *The Color Purple*, maintains that if a movie can’t tell, it can’t sell: “As the noise level of modern life has become a cacophony, the ability to tell a purposeful story that can truly be heard is increasingly in demand. ... You have to reach

⁸⁶ Ibid. 46-51.

⁸⁷ Leo Widrich, “The Science of Storytelling: Why Telling a Story Is the Most Powerful Way to Activate Our Brains,” Life Hacker, May 12, 2012, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://lifehacker.com/5965703/the-science-of-storytelling-why-telling-a-story-is-the-most-powerful-way-to-activate-our-brains>.

⁸⁸ Gallo, *Talk Like TED*, 49.

people's hearts as well as their minds, and this is just what story does.”⁸⁹ Indeed, good speakers tell stories, but great speakers tell personal stories.⁹⁰

Brandon Hilgeman notes the connection that preachers must make with stories: “The best sermon illustrations are founded on common ground between the speaker and the audience. When you speak about something you have experienced and your audience has also experienced the same thing, you connect with them on the deepest level.”⁹¹ Books and websites abound with lists and collections of illustrations and stories. While these serve as great resources for Toastmasters, for pastors the most effective stories remain the ones the speaker has lived. Great communicators constantly read and observe as they go through their day-to-day activities, consciously and unconsciously gathering and storing the stories of life. During the preparation process, it remains important to allow time and the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the most impactful stories to weave into the message.

Logos

While a presenter may exhibit credibility (ethos) and empathy (pathos), listeners still need to understand what a speaker communicates. Even if a presenter possesses a high degree of credibility, the message must make sense and, even more importantly,

⁸⁹ Peter Guber, *Tell to Win: Connect, Persuade, and Triumph with the Hidden Power of Story* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2013), ix.

⁹⁰ Carmine Gallo, “7 Advanced Presentation Tips to Become a Great Public Speaker,” *Forbes*, July 23, 2014, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2014/07/22/7-advanced-presentation-tips-to-become-a-great-public-speaker/#4c38698c57b4>.

⁹¹ Hilgemann, *Preaching Nuts & Bolts*, 756-758.

must appeal to the audience.⁹² Logos provides this critical third element; it represents the ability to appeal to the audience's sense of reason. The word *logic* derives from this concept of using words to convey reason.⁹³ The speaker uses logos to express thoughts and concepts in clear and compelling terms to influence listeners. The speaker gathers and analyzes data, but realizes that data and the facts do not speak for themselves. The speaker who employs logos exerts time and effort to weave together a logical, persuasive, and focused speech, one that the speaker has carefully prepared to accommodate the attention span of one's audience.⁹⁴

Attention Spans

As the communication process reveals, the speaker endeavors to communicate a message to a listener. The speaker conveys the message through a channel in a situation or setting where feedback and interference will also remain active and potentially yield a breakdown in the process. Frequently, breakdowns result from the speaker falling short in the preparation and delivery of the message. Invariably, the speaker must deal with feedback and interference issues, which typically surface from the audience end of the process. The most common interference issue comes from the attention spans of the audience. Communicators must remain prepared to help the audience by communicating effectively to capture and retain the audience's attention. Also, the communicator must detect lapses in attention and adjust in order to recapture the audience's attention.

⁹² Conger, 69.

⁹³ Merriam-Webster, s.v. "logos," accessed August 9, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Logos>.

⁹⁴ Edinger, 4.

Author Mimi Goss has diagnosed this era as the age of short attention spans. She suggests that a speaker's confidence captures the audience's attention, and by giving a clear sense of direction, the speaker can keep their attention.⁹⁵ Such confidence and clarity will result from the speaker applying the elements essential to effective communication.

At the base of the human brain stem is a filter called the reticular activating system (RAS). This filter assists the brain, so it does not have to consciously respond to the millions of stimuli that constantly bombards it throughout the day. The RAS continuously sifts and sorts the things one sees, hears, and smells. It then forwards only a select few of those stimuli to the consciousness. This way an individual does not become overloaded and overwhelmed. If one had to consciously respond to every stimulus the senses pick up, one could go crazy. The reticular activating system determines what gets a person's attention.⁹⁶ In general, three things always make it past the reticular activating system: things one values, things that are unique, and things that are threatening.⁹⁷ This system has profound implications for the way pastors preach and teach. If ministers want to capture the attention of a group of people, they must tie their message to one of these three attention-getters.

⁹⁵ Mimi Goss. *What Is Your One Sentence? How to Be Heard in the Age of Short Attention Spans* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 17, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Brad Worthley, "The Reticular Activating System," Thrive in Life, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://www.thriveinlife.ca/thrive/index.php/expert-series-addattention-deficit-disorder-is-not-who-i-am-it-is-what-i-have/#more-1864>.

⁹⁷ Caroline Leaf, *Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 73, Kindle.

The effective communicator pays attention to the audience's attention level. Too many speakers seem to blather on unaware that they long ago lost their audience. Without the audience's attention to the speaker and the message, the neural networks in the listener's brains won't respond to the speaker's words. The speaker's words would simply fall into a void as if one were to speak into a phone without a listener on the other end. As Erickson and Ward describe, without attention, there exists no retention.⁹⁸ If the audience does not connect, the speaker has failed to communicate.

Communicators must take into account that the average person has an attention span of five to seven minutes, while a college student has a span of ten to fifteen minutes.⁹⁹ In any setting where a speech, presentation, or sermon is given, numerous factors could affect the audience's ability to pay attention—the temperature, a baby crying, excessive movement by another audience member, poor lighting or sound, among other common distractors. Television bears much of the blame for shortening attention spans. Television programming incessantly intersperses commercials into the scheduled program every six to seven minutes, taking up fifteen minutes and thirty-eight seconds of every hour of television programming. Television habits have sliced linear thinking and concentration into seven-minute segments. This reduced attention span impacts one's ability to pay attention in virtually every other setting. Savvy communicators will monitor and adjust to meet this challenge by utilizing any number of teaching techniques to maintain or regain the audience's attention. For example, they may show a slide, tell a

⁹⁸ Erickson, 139.

⁹⁹ Karen Wilson and James H. Korn, "Attention during Lectures: Beyond Ten Minutes," *Teaching of Psychology* 34, no. 2 (June 2016), 85-89.

joke, have the audience repeat a word or phrase, change their pitch, tone, or volume, use gestures, invite a verbal or physical response, or even call for the audience to give their attention. In the end, appealing to logos by gaining and maintaining the audience's attention through a focused message remains a vital skill for the effective communicator.

Focus

TED, a media organization, holds conferences and posts videos online under the slogan "ideas worth spreading." The acronym TED stands for technology, education, and design. Their famous TED Talks feature individuals, usually experts to some degree, who stand and share their ideas with their audience and ultimately the world through videos posted online. What makes TED Talks unique, though, is not simply the information and ideas but the outstanding communication skills of their speakers.

Communications coach, former news anchor, and columnist Carmine Gallo has analyzed over five hundred TED Talk presentations and has interviewed a large number of TED speakers. He notes that "some people are exceptionally good at presenting their ideas. Their skill elevates their stature and influence in today's society. There's nothing more inspiring than a bold idea delivered by a great speaker. Ideas effectively packaged and delivered can change the world."¹⁰⁰ Herein lies the heart of this issue: teaching ministers to talk like TED speakers and preach like Jesus. Through his extensive observation of the TED phenomenon, Gallo has isolated nine common elements of what makes such communication so effective, but his "Stick to the 18-Minute Rule" remains most notable.

¹⁰⁰ Gallo, *Talk Like TED*, 1.

TED requires speakers to stand in the middle of a red circle on the floor, face their audience, and speak for no more than eighteen minutes. Eighteen minutes is the limit for all speakers, no matter how rich, famous, or influential they may be. Research demonstrates good reasons for this time limit. Studies show that the longer the presentation, the more the listener has to organize, comprehend, and remember. Longer presentations produce information overload or what Gallo calls “cognitive backlog,” which produces anxiety in the listener. Further, the listener begins to fatigue as brain cells use twice as much energy as any other cells in the body. Feeling anxiety and fatigue, the listener will either no longer pay attention or try to find ways to distract themselves from the presentation, growing frustrated or even angry.¹⁰¹ Certainly, the speaker does not intend to impact the audience in this way.

The effective speaker must value clarity and brevity. The speaker must remain focused from conception of an idea, through study and preparation, and to the presentation itself. Whether writing or speaking, the writer or speaker should present the core of their message in a single sentence. Communications expert Mimi Goss says, “If you want people to hear your voice, you must be able to convey your message in one memorable sentence.”¹⁰² Memorable single sentences vary widely, as indicated by the following: “If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves” (Thomas Edison); “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1); “Look both ways before you cross the street” (Moms and Dads everywhere).

¹⁰¹ Gallo, *Talk Like TED*, 184.

¹⁰² Goss, xiii.

Indeed, whether raising small children, negotiating a peace treaty, giving an important sales pitch at a Fortune 500 company, proposing marriage, or preaching in a church, clarity and brevity will always serve well. Malcolm Gladwell contends that “people make instant judgments about others. Getting your point across quickly is both more important today and more difficult than ever.”¹⁰³ Obviously great ideas need more expansion and explanation than a single sentence; however, the principles of clarity and brevity should drive the presentation.

In *The Master Communicator's Handbook*, Teresa Erickson and Tim Ward present the four “C’s” of crafting a strong message: concise, concrete, connected, and catchy. They espouse that the speaker should get to the core of the message using simple, easy-to-grasp words and short sentences.¹⁰⁴ Deanna Kotrla stresses that clarity remains the key to articulating the main points without complexity.¹⁰⁵ The phrase “crystal clear focus” describes this approach well. Ken Davis maintains that speaking with a crystal clear focus remains the secret of dynamic communication: “Focus doesn’t happen in public on a well-lit platform. It happens in secret in the quiet of your home or office.”¹⁰⁶ Robert Morris encourages pastors to prepare long, but preach short: “The shorter you prepare, the longer you will preach. Most people think it’s the opposite. If your preparation is poor, you’ll end up rambling behind the pulpit. When you take the time and energy to prepare your message in fine detail, you’ll be able to hear the purest

¹⁰³ Ibid., xiv.

¹⁰⁴ Erickson and Ward, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Kotrla.

¹⁰⁶ Davis, 5.

essence of what God wants to tell His people.”¹⁰⁷ Thorough preparation enables the preacher to have crystal clear focus.

Haddon Robinson has taught for decades that “a sermon should be a bullet and not buckshot.”¹⁰⁸ He has long advocated that developing a single sermon idea is not only the best way to learn to preach, but also is the most effective way for an audience or congregation to learn: “Ideally, each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture.” He refers to this as “the big idea.”¹⁰⁹

Author Duane Litfin supports the concept of one big idea as he provides a historic overview.

There exists a remarkable consensus among those who have studied and practiced public speaking over the last twenty-five hundred years that the most effective way to structure a speech is to build it around a single significant thought. From the ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians to the latest communication theorists, from preaching in the Bible to the sermons heard in pulpits today, from the political oratory of democracies long past to the persuasive message of our own times, the history of public speaking and the lessons we have learned from that history unite to argue forcefully that *a speech, to be maximally effective, ought to attempt to develop more or less fully only one major proposition*” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁰

Likewise, Aristotle presents the idea that the most effective rhetoric involves a single thought or line of argument.¹¹¹ This practice has become an accepted approach by skilled orators down through the centuries.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Morris. *From Good to Great Preaching; Five Practical, Spirit-led Tips to Feeding God's Sheep* (Southlake, TX: Gateway Church, 2014), 11.

¹⁰⁸ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 33.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹⁰ Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1998), 174.

¹¹¹ Christof Rapp, “Aristotle’s Rhetoric,” in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed

Robinson's description of effective sermons as "a bullet and not buckshot" illustrates the need to fight the tendency of trying to explain everything by making too many points. Having more than one point is like having no point at all.¹¹² The musical *The Point* creatively shows this when the characters Oblio and his dog Arrow are banished to the Pointless Forest, a place where all things are pointless. There they meet the Pointless Man, or the Pointed Man, depending on one's point of view. The Pointless Man had a point. In fact, he had hundreds of them, but as he quickly points out, "A point in every direction is the same as no point at all."¹¹³

Certainly, people have delivered countless speeches and sermons with multiple points, and arguably, they have been worthwhile to some degree. However, speakers striving to be effective should seek to identify an application, an insight, or a principle as the single thrust. This one central idea serves as the glue that holds all parts of the message together. Instead of two, three, or even four ideas or points, speakers need to find one central idea. The challenge lies in clearing away all the other less important information and clutter so that one arrives at *the* point instead of *a* point.¹¹⁴ This represents Robinson's *Big Idea* approach to preaching, which requires clarity, brevity, and thorough preparation to produce crystal clear focus.

August 9, 2017, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/arostotle-rhetoric->.

¹¹² Willhite, 21.

¹¹³ Ibid., 21.

¹¹⁴ Stanley and Jones, 103-106.

Preparation

Preparation stands as the bridge that one must cross in order to effectively deliver a focused message. One may gather all of the other important and essential ingredients, but without proper preparation, the results will still fall far short of the desired goal of effective communication. Just as a cook takes time in the grocery store to carefully select ingredients, transports them home, and deliberately combines them in the kitchen for a delicious meal, so too does the speaker meticulously plan for the important gathering. Conversely, sloppy messages, like a poorly prepared meal, disappoint not only the one who prepares them, but also the one who consumes them. Well-executed messages require preparation. As Ian Berry summarizes, “Proper preparation prevents poor performance.”¹¹⁵

High level preparation includes thorough study, writing, and intensive practice to bring the speaker to a place where he or she can deliver a remarkable message. Delivering “a memorable presentation that will leave your audience in awe” means that practice is non-negotiable.¹¹⁶ Marvin Williams asserts that “a call to preach is a call to preparation. A prepared preacher is a powerful preacher.”¹¹⁷ Practice is not something that one does “once you’re good. It’s the thing you do that makes you good.”¹¹⁸ Great golfers make their game look easy because they practice countless hours each day.

¹¹⁵ Ian Berry, *Public Speaking: Deconstructing the Art of Public Speaking*. Communication, Public Speaking, Small Talk, Body Language, Book 1 (Amazon Digital Services, 2016), 87, Kindle.

¹¹⁶ Gallo, *Talk Like Ted*, 81.

¹¹⁷ Joe Hoagland and Brandon Kelley, *Preaching Sticky Sermons: A Practical Guide to Preparing, Writing, and Delivering Memorable Sermons* (Scottsdale, AZ: Rainer Publishing, 2016), 25, Kindle.

¹¹⁸ Carmine Gallo, *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to Be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 2448-2450, Kindle.

Likewise, skilled basketball players seem to make shots effortlessly because they shoot thousands of practice shots when no one else watches. Given the value and the potential life-changing impact preaching can have, preachers must give preparation and practice premium time and effort.

Many consider the late Steve Jobs one of the master communicators of this era. Jobs would give presentations called keynotes to launch Apple's new and innovative products with the greatest of ease. A reporter from *Business Week* magazine observed that Jobs' perceived persona of informality and comfort came from "hours of grueling practice."¹¹⁹ Jobs would spend hundreds of hours for a five-minute demonstration.¹²⁰ Jobs serves as an example not only of a dynamic presenter, but also a model for putting in the time and effort necessary in preparation to ensure a dynamic presentation.

Maxwell identifies preparation as one of the key proactive ways to ensure connection with and clarity for the audience. Through preparation, the speaker can anticipate what the audience needs and focus on how they feel, bringing all the right elements together for a successful presentation.¹²¹

Unique to the ministry of preaching and teaching God's Word is the extra value placed on the preparation of the speaker. Preaching consists of more than eloquent words and a well-crafted presentation, and "a prepared messenger is more important than a prepared message."¹²² A sermon summarizes a preacher's character, passion, and words.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 2454-2455.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 2467.

¹²¹ Maxwell, 132-133.

¹²² Hilgemann, *Preaching Nuts and Bolts*, 70.

In this way, ethos, pathos, and logos inform the preacher's preparation. Such preparation goes beyond a few hours or days prior to the preached sermon. This preparation is, in fact, a lifestyle. One must consistently live in a state of submission to God and His Word, endeavoring to walk in the Spirit and staying humble before God and people.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos and the Art of Persuasion

With regard to the modern understanding of ethos, pathos, and logos, “these ancient descriptions of what is or is not likely to persuade seem remarkably contemporary. We could argue that most contemporary research is derived from the work of Aristotle in some way or another.”¹²³ Indeed, in the 1950s, a Yale study group led by psychologist Carl Hovland researched the stimulus-response effects of the many variables and elements of persuasion. The research centered on persuasion in the arenas of politics and wartime propaganda. Hovland sought to estimate the importance of a speaker's ethos, the effectiveness of pathos, and the types of logos that speakers should pursue. Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell note that Hovland's Yale study program “led to a greater understanding of persuasion and stimulated subsequent research in persuasion for years to come.”¹²⁴

One of the significant contributions of Hovland's research program concerns the “specification of an initial set of characteristics that influence one's acceptance of a

¹²³ Charles U. Larson, *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility* (Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2007), 61.

¹²⁴ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015), 133.

persuasive communication.”¹²⁵ Hovland’s conclusions describe these characteristics as the source of the persuasive communication, the characteristics of the message, and the characteristics of the receiver and the context of the message. An article in the *International Journal of Social Inquiry* concludes that “these factors are closely reminding us of Aristotle’s analysis of persuasion in his *Rhetoric*, as ethos, pathos, and logos.”¹²⁶ Indeed, ethos, pathos, and logos work together and bolster one another to serve as the essentials of effective public speaking.

The messages that have resounded throughout history are ones that people can hear, feel, and live. Regarding these findings and the context of effective sermons, ethos, pathos, and logos remain the sum of a preacher’s character, passion, and words. Nobody wants to listen to a preacher who doesn’t practice what one preaches (ethos). Likewise, nobody wants to listen to a preacher who doesn’t feel the message (pathos), nor do they want to listen to a preacher who fumbles with words or makes no sense (logos). Even the Apostle Paul emphasizes the value of these elements in writing to the Thessalonians when he proclaims, “Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (1 Thess. 1:5, ESV).

¹²⁵ Kay Deaux, Francis C. Dane, and Lawrence S. Wrightman, *Social Psychology in the 90’s* (CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1993), 180.

¹²⁶ Ülkü D. Demirdöğen, “The Roots of Research in (Political) Persuasion: Ethos, Pathos, Logos and the Yale Studies of Persuasive Communications,” *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 3, no. 1 (2010): 189-201.

Glossophobia

Of the most common fears that the average American has, glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, ranks first over the fear of heights, bugs, snakes, drowning, blood, needles, small spaces, flying, strangers, darkness, death, and clowns.¹²⁷ Anxiety of giving speeches is quite common, and most people experience some level of anxiety when they have to speak in front of a group. Speech anxiety can range from slight nervousness to a nearly incapacitating fear. Some of the most common symptoms of speech anxiety include shaking, sweating, butterflies in the stomach, dry mouth, rapid heartbeat, squeaky voice, or inability to focus. Although it is often impossible to completely eliminate speech anxiety, a variety of ways exist to minimize it.¹²⁸ Controlling public speaking anxiety begins with what one does long before the day of the presentation. Preparation, practice, and perseverance remain vital to minimizing stress. The more prepared a person is, the less nervous one feels. Lack of preparation or last-minute preparation increases anxiety.

In addition, speakers should arrive early and get comfortable with the setting.¹²⁹ As a believer, one should pray, if possible, in this space and occupy that space for the preaching of God's Word. It also helps to realize that the audience wants the speaker to

¹²⁷ Glenn Croston, "The Thing We Fear More Than Death," *Psychology Today*, November 29, 2012, accessed July 9, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-real-story-risk/201211/the-thing-we-fear-more-death>.

¹²⁸ University of Pittsburgh, "Speaking in the Disciplines," University of Pittsburgh, August 21, 2008, accessed July 10, 2017, <http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/student/public-speaking/speechanxiety.html>.

¹²⁹ Erickson, 93.

do well. Rarely is an audience hostile toward the speaker.¹³⁰ Speakers should also shift their focus from themselves to focusing on the event, the process of communicating, and the audience. The speaker should think about wanting to serve and help their audience.¹³¹ A minister should at this point also realize that God is present to help the speaker in the communicating of His Word. Certainly, the minister should pray specifically for God's strength and presence to be sufficient for personal shortcomings.

During the message, the speaker can minimize stress by slowing down and pausing. Pauses give the audience time to catch up and absorb the message. They also give the speaker time to take some slow, deliberate breaths that will help them relax and quell anxiety.¹³² Just before going out to speak, the speaker should privately stretch facial muscles by exaggerating a big smile and opening eyes as wide as possible. These exercises will relax the jaw and throat, as well as stretch out important facial muscles that tend to twitch or contract when anxiety takes over.¹³³

Thorough knowledge and grasp of the topic at hand is advantageous. The better the speaker understands and cares about the topic, the less likely they will get off track or make a mistake, which significantly contributes to speech anxiety. By having thorough

¹³⁰ J. Berg Esenwein and Dale Carnegie, *The Art of Public Speaking* (Springfield, MA: Home Correspondence School, 1915), 210, Kindle.

¹³¹ Hoagland, 1322.

¹³² Erickson, 44.

¹³³ Esenwein and Carnegie, 2306.

knowledge and passion about the topic, however, the speaker will likely recover quickly even in moments of nervousness or mishaps.¹³⁴

Being well-organized ahead of time also helps. Before the event, the speaker should carefully plan the information to present, including any props and audio or visual aids that might be used. The more organized one is, the less nervous the individual will be. Use of an outline on a small card also helps keep the speaker on track. If possible, speakers should take time to visit the place where they'll be speaking and review available equipment before the presentation.¹³⁵

Ultimately, the best antidote for speech anxiety is practice, and then more practice. One should practice the complete presentation several times. Doing it in front of a few trusted individuals and asking for helpful feedback can be useful. Another option is to record a practice session with a video camera and watch it to find opportunities for improvement.¹³⁶ Communication coaches also suggest visualizing a successful presentation, imagining that all goes well. Positive thoughts can help decrease some of the negativity about an individual's social performance and assist in relieving some anxiety. Deep breathing can also prove calming. Taking several deep, slow breaths prior to going to the podium and during pauses in the presentation will aid the speaker.¹³⁷ In the end, ministers and speakers will triumph over speech anxiety by thoroughly

¹³⁴ Heidi V. Anderson, "A Virtual End to Stage Fright," *Harvard Management Communication Letter*, January 2003, 3-4.

¹³⁵ Erickson, 94.

¹³⁶ Tony E. Smith and Ann Bainbridge Frymier, "Get 'Real:' Does Practicing Speeches Before an Audience Improve Performance?" *Communication Quarterly* 54 (2006): 111-125.

¹³⁷ Esenwein and Carnegie, 218.

preparing, repeatedly practicing, persevering through nervousness and missteps, and remembering that God is present to help.¹³⁸

Conclusion

A review of contemporary literature echoes and unfolds many of the elements and competencies found in the communication techniques used by Jesus. Further, research reveals a commonly agreed upon consensus of what makes an effective communicator. Elements and competencies can be used in virtually any setting, especially with those preaching and teaching the Word. This setting holds several unique considerations as ministers couple this with prayer and a desire to help the audience.

God remains the author and architect of the communication process. Humankind is wired to respond to certain elements in communication. The presence or absence of these elements can either ensure or prevent effective communication. The human brain responds to the various elements of communication, which results in sustained attention and retention, both of which are vital to a message being successfully communicated.

Ministers who desire to remain effective in preaching and teaching would do well to understand the process of communication and the principles of persuasion. Knowing how to connect with the audience remains the duty of the speaker. Therefore, for the minister of God's Word, preparation becomes a lifestyle. The message then becomes the intersection of the preacher's character (ethos), passion (pathos), and words (logos), creating the greatest potential for impacting the audience. Further, they must devote great effort to the development and mastery of the different competencies that determine

¹³⁸ Lane Sebring, *Preaching Killer Sermon: How to Create and Deliver Messages That Captivate and Inspire*, (Centreville, VA: Preaching Donkey, 2016), 2188.

message reception and retention, with the hope that the audience will apply the life-changing message presented. The minister bears the responsibility to fully apply themselves to continue to grow to become a master teacher, in the service of the Master Teacher.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF FIELD PROJECT

Introduction

Preachers and teachers within the church have a solemn responsibility to communicate the Word of God with the greatest of care as demonstrated by this project's biblical-theological review and reinforced by its general literature review. The practical ministry intervention that arose from this research on effective communication resulted in the Presenters Lab. This lab was an intensive, eight-week seminar consisting of weekly labs for the ministers and staff of Meadowbrook Church, designed to inform and assist ministers in more effectively communicating the Word, thus impacting their leadership. This chapter details the planning, execution, and results of Presenters Lab, as well as the project's contribution to practical ministry.

Preparation of the Project

This project drew from my thirty-five plus years of ministry experience and the research I conducted for the biblical-theological and general literature reviews. Preparation consisted of scheduling the participants, establishing a location, and preparing the teaching material.

Scheduling Participants

The participants consisted of Meadowbrook Church's fourteen full-time staff pastors, the academy principal, the Southeastern University extension site director, and

several other key staff members who serve in various ministry capacities that require them to speak and present.

By notifying and inviting each one to participate at the request of the senior pastor, scheduling, for the most part, remained relatively easy for attendees. Because I provided early notice, each participant had the time to adjust to their schedules to accommodate the seminar; however, not all participants were able to attend every session due to the nature of ministry. All participants carry a full ministry load, and several pastors remained on call during some of the sessions. As a result, I prepared for this situation by asking the video staff to record the lecture portion of each session. Having each session on video enabled participants to view any session they missed or to repeat sessions as desired.

Establishing a Location

I planned for the Presenters Lab to take place in a multi-purpose room at Meadowbrook Church. The modern and comfortable room is well-equipped with special lighting, sound equipment, and video playback. I set up the chairs in two semi-circles facing a small stage that has a lectern, white board, and video screen. The setting served as an ideal accommodation for the labs.

Preparing the Teaching Materials

After lengthy and thorough research, I analyzed and organized the information into various themes. I gave attention to how all the material formed a consensus as related to the elements of persuasion, the example of Jesus as a master communicator, and the skills utilized by other notable speakers. I then synthesized the materials and arranged them in a logical order to be presented over the eight sessions. This included designing

the Presenters Lab to address five aspects of learning: experience, exegesis, exposure, evaluation, and engagement. Each session included a lecture, PowerPoint presentation, discussion, and application activities; weeks one through six also utilized video clips and analyses.

Execution of the Project

The Presenters Lab occurred every Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for eight weeks, except for weeks six and seven, which I planned for ninety minutes. The labs began on March 2, 2017 and concluded April 27, 2017. Each session began and ended promptly on time to reinforce the idea that speakers must value other people's time, which, in turn, builds trust with the listeners. This trust helped create an atmosphere conducive to effective communication.

As the facilitator, I opened each session with prayer, asking God to help each one to grow and improve as a communicator for the good of the kingdom of God. I then briefly reviewed the previous session and introduced the topics for the current session. Every session included a lecture supported by a PowerPoint presentation. I built in several breaks for discussion during the lecture, and participants readily joined in the discussions. For the first six sessions, I showed three two-minute video clips of a variety of speakers, covering a broad range of presenting styles and settings. After each clip, I invited participants to analyze the presenters and then discuss whether each presenter was engaging. They also contrasted and compared the different speaking styles and identified the various elements of communication taught in the weekly labs. Each lab averaged twenty-two participants in attendance.

Week One

Introduction

I opened the first session by welcoming each one and thanking them for participating in the Presenters Lab. I explained that the labs comprised my doctoral ministry intervention project, which grew from my desire to help each of them grow and improve as a communicator. This growth would, in turn, help them become more effective ministers and leaders.

I also gave an overview of the AGTS Doctor of Ministry program and explained the nature and purpose of the doctoral project and how the research, writing, and field project components serve as the culmination of the program's course of study. I explained that the Presenters Lab grew out of an observed need to improve ministerial communication and that I had thoroughly researched how to effectively address and abate this need. The Presenters Lab would be the practical application of the rigorous research on effective communication from both a biblical and general literature perspective. The Presenters Lab, as a doctoral project, is not simply an academic exercise, but is a marriage of theory and practice.¹

I explained that the purpose of the labs was rooted in addressing our problems as ministers with ineffective presentations. I contrasted this to Jesus, who astonished His audience when He taught (Matt. 7:28). God has entrusted pastors and ministers with the greatest message on this planet; however, many of today's pastors and ministers finish their teaching and leave their audience feeling vastly different than Jesus's audience. This

¹ Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, *Doctor of Ministry Project Design Handbook* (Springfield, MO: AGTS, 2017).

deficit in communication impacts two major aspects of ministry. First, they do not convey the life-giving message of the gospel in an engaging manner, and second, their limited communication skills limit their leadership.

This first lab emphasized that to minister effectively, leaders must not only make decisions and discern directions, but they also must communicate these decisions and directions to followers. If leaders are not capable communicators, their leadership will remain limited at best. Leaders, therefore, should make gaining effective communication skills their chief pursuit. Despite their personal gifts and skills, the degree to which leaders succeed or fail depends on their ability to communicate.

Overview

I then gave a brief overview of how I designed the Presenters Lab and what I hoped we would accomplish in each session. I explained that the labs would focus on five different categories of learning: experience, exegesis, exposure, evaluation, and engagement. Experience would involve the hands-on active ministry areas in which each pastor has an ongoing responsibility to communicate. For example, if the participant is a children's pastor, the pastor would apply the information to children's church, or if the participant serves as a care pastor, the individual would relate it to counseling an individual or family, or leading a seminar. I encouraged each minister to receive the information with their ministry context in mind.

The exegesis portion of the lab would help ensure that each participant becomes well-versed in the key interpretation skills of the biblical texts. I explained that I would give extensive time to exegesis in the second week. The exposure component would include watching and listening to other teachers and communicators, either in person or

through media. Additionally, I encouraged each participant to personally make this an ongoing practice because exposure benefits ministers as they grow in communication, in addition to offering devotional value.

I then explained the evaluation component, which would be completed through peers, leaders, and self-evaluation. The evaluative criteria would include numerous aspects embodied by Jesus as a communicator. Finally, I explained engagement, which would occur through interaction in the group setting during the weekly labs. I emphasized that each participant's personal spirituality and ongoing spiritual formation would remain central to each of these categories. I then asked each participant to complete a pre-session self-evaluation. The seventeen questions asked participants to rate themselves on various aspects of presenting.

After participants took the pre-session evaluation, I showed video clips of three diverse presenters: Christine Caine (evangelist), Ravi Zacharias (apologist), and Zig Ziglar (motivational speaker/salesman). These videos captured everyone's attention. I invited the participants to share their thoughts on which style they enjoyed most, what made each one a compelling communicator, or what they did or did not like about a certain speaker. This led to a valuable time of interaction.

Authenticity Lecture

Using a PowerPoint presentation, I then lectured on authenticity as a principal element that every presenter must possess and demonstrate.² Authenticity will greatly determine whether the audience believes the speaker. Despite whatever other skills one

² See Appendix A, "Week One PowerPoint."

may possess as a communicator, a lack of authenticity aborts effective communication. Authenticity serves as an especially critical factor for a communicator involved in ministry. I placed great emphasis on authenticity, as this often lacks among communicators. The subject of authenticity also includes body language and other non-verbal forms of communication. Further, authenticity remains integral to the speaker's ethos.

Week Two

This session began with a lecture and discussion focusing on each participant viewing communication as a means of serving God and others. With this as a motivator, each participant should desire to improve as a communicator to serve God and others to one's best ability—the definition of ministry. Arguably, the most effective form of ministry is through the teaching and preaching of God's truths.

The group then spent extensive time reviewing exegesis and key interpretation skills. As an interpretive method, exegesis establishes the meaning of a biblical text or passage by studying the text's historical context which is important in making application of that study to the contemporary situation and environment. While the Presenters Lab would focus mostly on delivery and presentation, participants learned that all is lost if one presents wrong information, especially concerning God and His Word. I emphasized the importance of proper exegesis, presenting not only the basics of proper exegetical methods, but also useful translation tools such as biblical translations, books, commentaries, and Bible software. This information served as a review for several of the participants, but for most of them, it was a primer of proper exegesis. Each one learned

that communicating in a context in which they share truths from the Bible requires a basic grasp of proper Bible interpretation.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, I then introduced and briefly discussed the presenter elements exemplified by Jesus and noted in general literature as characteristics commonly utilized by effective communicators: authenticity, passion, knowing one's audience, stories, humor, presenting loud and clear, pace, enunciation, body language, application, clarity, brevity, preparation, and questions.³ While I could not cover all the elements with equal detail, I explained that each remained equally important.

The final portion of this session included video clips of three presenters, Beth Moore, Steven Furtick, and Bishop T.D. Jakes, followed by analysis and discussion of how each presenter utilized the various elements of communication. Unlike the videos shown in the first lab, each of these presenters minister and preach God's Word, yet they represent three diverse communication styles. Once again, a healthy discussion ensued as the participants considered the speakers' use of the presenter elements, as well as what they each considered most effective.

Week Three

I opened this session with teaching on the messenger and the message, emphasizing the life and consecration of the minister. We then spent some time discussing this important and underemphasized aspect of life-changing ministry. I placed great emphasis on the immense responsibility of ministers to not only prepare and present a message, but also to live a life that remains congruent with the message they espouse.

³ See Appendix B, "Week Two PowerPoint."

At this point, I continued teaching on the fourteen presenter elements and expanded on the competency of knowing one's audience. I reminded the participants that while we did not have time to discuss each one in depth, they must value each element and understand their vital roles in effective communication. I accompanied this lecture with a PowerPoint presentation.⁴

The final portion of the session included video clips of three presenters for analysis and discussion: Craig Groeschel, Michelle Obama, and President Ronald Reagan. This collective group provided a broad range of speakers—a minister, a president's wife, and a politician. Each speaker communicates incredibly well, yet they do so in vastly different contexts and with different goals for what they hope to achieve through their messages. The discussion that followed proved highly passionate and enlightening, revealing how politics and ministry can mirror each other in intensity.

Week Four

In the fourth session, I introduced the approach “Talk Like Ted—Preach Like Jesus.”⁵ This concept stands at the heart of the Presenters Lab. It combines the best practices of contemporary communicators with the timeless practices utilized by Jesus, the master communicator. The bulk of this session outlined and unfolded the nine essential competencies used by presenters of TED Talks: unleash the master within; master the art of storytelling; have a conversation; teach me something new; deliver jaw-

⁴ See Appendix C, “Week Three PowerPoint.”

⁵ See Appendix D, “Week Four PowerPoint.”

dropping moments; lighten up; stick to the eighteen-minute rule; paint a mental picture with multisensory experiences; and stay in your lane.

These nine competencies closely echo and support the fourteen presenter elements previously presented and discussed. I gave ample time for the participants to discuss and interact, so they could identify the parallel components of each list. Most of the participants were familiar with the TED Talk videos. The competencies remain easily observable by the vast range of TED Talk speakers. This component of the session proved highly valuable for the Presenters Lab. The idea and goal of each participant to talk like Ted and preach like Jesus yielded a helpful and memorable way to summarize the purpose of the lab. This resonated well with each participant.

Week Five

This session dealt with the problem of glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, also known as speech anxiety. This common problem affects nearly everyone to some degree. The fear of public speaking remains at the top of people's lists of fears, which includes things such as drowning, flying, and clowns. Fear can greatly impede one's ability to function in certain settings, which makes it important to address it among individuals endeavoring to become more effective communicators.

I then gave practical and spiritual advice and methods to help participants manage or overcome speech anxiety. I began by explaining that speakers gain courage by understanding that they do not face this struggle alone; most people deal with the same issue. Simply armed with that knowledge can provide a sense of hope and courage, providing space for the speaker to make gains in managing or overcoming this issue. We

discussed three important antidotes for glossophobia: preparation, practice, and perseverance.

The next portion of this session dealt with the life of the preacher. I emphasized that great preaching requires much more than eloquent words and a carefully crafted presentation. As the late pastor and professor Robert Munger asserts, “A prepared messenger is more important than a prepared message.”⁶ This aspect of communication remains unique to Christian ministry because ministers who do not cultivate a healthy personal life will limit their ministry impact. I distributed to each of the participants a copy of a sample document called “The Preacher’s Manifesto” and encouraged them to use it as a template or inspiration for their own meaningful manifesto.⁷

I then introduced the aspects of the art of persuasion, discussing the elements of rhetoric as they relate to the three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. These three modes provide the foundation for everything else discussed in the labs. All elements of effective communication can be categorized by or connected to these three modes of rhetoric.⁸

We then watched, analyzed, and discussed video clips of Eric Thomas (motivational speaker), Bishop Dale Bronner (pastor), and Steve Jobs (technological pioneer, guru, and master communicator) to compare and contrast a broad diversity of contexts and styles. The three speakers not only provided variety, but they also all

⁶ Brandon Hilgemann, *Preaching Nuts & Bolts: Conquer Sermon Prep, Save Time, and Write Better Messages* (Amazon Digital Services: 2017), 68.

⁷ See Appendix E, “Preacher’s Manifesto.”

⁸ See Appendix F, “Week Five PowerPoint.”

uniquely modeled the previously discussed elements of effective communication. Notably, they distinctly modeled the three modes of rhetoric, ethos, pathos, and logos. The lab participants specifically noted the element of pathos, or passion, exhibited by the speakers. The discussion following the videos proved insightful, and nearly all the participants enthusiastically engaged in dialogue.

Week Six

In this session, I continued to emphasize the dynamic combination of talking like TED and preaching like Jesus. I also presented a new view of what it means to entertain, focusing on its definition: “capturing and holding the attention for an extended period of time.”⁹ We discussed that there exist concrete and non-spiritual reasons why Jesus’s audiences delighted in listening to Him.

I explained that if the minister bores listeners or presents a message in an uninteresting fashion, people will not only think that the speaker is boring but that God is boring as well. This potential misrepresentation of God and His good news should motivate ministers to discover and develop the competencies modeled by Jesus and effective contemporary speakers.

This lecture then segued into the use and power of stories. I presented information from neuro-scientific research regarding how the brain is wired for stories. Research reveals that stories hold people’s attention, stirs their emotions, helps them remember, and persuades them. Not surprising, Jesus was a master storyteller. Stories comprised His favorite and most frequently used technique. Therefore, if one talks like TED and

⁹ *Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary*, s.v. “entertain,” accessed August 9, 2017, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/entertain>

preaches like Jesus, the speaker must incorporate stories into the message. I gave practical instruction on how to collect and place stories, noting that the use of personal stories remains the most effective kind of story.¹⁰ I ended the session with a brief recap and a short time of question and answer.

Week Seven

The seventh session focused extensively on homiletics, the art and science of sermon preparation and delivery. I shared several key steps in sermon preparation, such as prayer, study, focus, illustrations (stories), outline, editing, practicing, and preaching. I emphasized the importance of and process involved in developing an outline, a vital aspect of preparing a strong presentation. Since sermon preparation and delivery remain unique to the individual minister, I presented numerous templates commonly used for sermon outlines. I encouraged the participants to develop their own outline template.

I also continued the earlier discussion on the life of the minister, noting that ministers must pay much attention to both their personal and public lives. Everything flows from the inside out, so ministers must value and strive for spiritual progress.¹¹ We then closed with a time of prayer.

Week Eight

This final session centered on three goals: preparing with focus, delivering with clarity, and speaking with power. These three ideas embody much of the heart of the Presenters Lab. I taught on the vital importance of the help and anointing of the Spirit of

¹⁰ See Appendix G, “Week Six PowerPoint Slides.”

¹¹ See Appendix H, “Week Seven PowerPoint.”

God, who enables ministers to effectively present. I then devoted a large amount of time for participants to discuss and ask questions.¹²

Each participant then completed a post-session evaluation. We closed the final session with a time of prayer and consecration for each of us to become the most effective presenters possible for the glory of God's Kingdom. I then thanked each one for participating in the Presenters Lab.

Results of the Project

Quantitative Results

I administered pre-session and post-session evaluations to measure any possible improvement experienced by each participant.¹³ The participants were asked to rate themselves as a presenter on a number of skills and practices. Using a Likert Scale they were to rate themselves as follows: 1 = excellent 2 = good 3 = average 4= needs improvement 5 = poor. The questions posed included the following:

1. Intentional about your message helping someone.
2. Careful about "how" you say what you say.
3. Your use of inflection and facial expressions.
4. Reflects a passion for the message you are presenting.
5. Aware of who your audience is.
6. You convey a message that is memorable.
7. Your use of stories.
8. Considered as being authentic by your audience.

¹² See Appendix I, "Week Eight PowerPoint Slides."

¹³ See Appendix J, "Pre-session and Post-session Evaluation Results."

9. You enunciate clearly.
10. You are easy to be heard and understood.
11. You always prepare adequately.
12. You emphasize main points in several ways.
13. You maintain an appropriate pace when presenting.
14. Your use of humor.
15. You establish and maintain a good connection with audience.
16. You stay within time restraints.
17. Overall, your rating as an influential presenter.

Participants used Survey Monkey to submit their evaluations. I then submitted the results to Dr. Jeff Fulks of Evangel University for statistical analysis. Dr. Fulks calculated the average scores (means) for pre-session and post-session evaluations for each of the seventeen items. In addition, he calculated a total score, which is the sum of each of the scores for the seventeen items. He compared the pre-session scores to the post-session scores for all means to determine if statistically significant differences exist.¹⁴ Of the eighteen analyses, no statistically significant differences exist from pre-session to post-session scores, an unusual occurrence as noted by the statistician. Eighteen participants took the pre-session evaluation while twenty-three participants took the post-session evaluation. It remains possible that the five additional people for the posttest could have been unusual and may have resulted in no discernable significant differences.

¹⁴ See Appendix K, "Data Analysis Results."

Notable trends, however, did appear within some of the changes from the pre-session scores to the post-session scores as they relate to pathos, ethos, and logos. While some participants noted improvement in their traits of effective communication after the labs, others indicated an awareness of their need to improve in the listed traits. Overall, these results point to the labs' positive impact on the participants.

One's Passion for the Message

Concerning pathos, when asked whether one reflects a passion for the message (question 4), no one marked "needs improvement" or "poor" during the pre-session evaluation; however, after the labs, nearly one third of participants (13.04 percent and 21.74 percent) indicated that they do not reflect enough passion in their communication.¹⁵ This change indicates that the labs helped participants understand the nature of passion and its vital role in the rhetorical mode known as pathos, a key component of effective communication.

Table 1: Passion for the Message

<i>Reflects Passion for Message</i>	<i>Pretest Results</i>	<i>Posttest Results</i>
1-Excellent	11.00%	39.00%
2-Good	72.00%	21.00%
3-Average	16.00%	4.35%
4-Needs Improvement	0.00%	13.04%
5-Poor	0.00%	21.74%

As the changes in the results show, some participants realized after the labs that either they do have passion or are ensuring they have passion when sharing the message, while others concluded that they need to cultivate more passion in communication.

¹⁵ See Appendix L, "Pre-session Survey."

One's Intention to Help Others

When asked on the pre-session evaluation if one is intentional about their message helping someone (question 1), an element integral to ethos, over two thirds (61.11 percent) rated themselves as “good,” and no one rated themselves as “poor;” however, after the labs, a notable shift occurred from “good” to “excellent,” as it did with “needs improvement” and “poor.”¹⁶ These changes indicate that the labs helped some participants greatly improve, while for others, the lab helped them to gain an awareness of their need to improve.

Table 2: Intentional about Message Helping Others

<i>Intentional about Message Helping Others</i>	<i>Pretest Results</i>	<i>Posttest Results</i>
1-Excellent	16.67%	30.43%
2-Good	61.11%	30.43%
3-Average	11.11%	8.70%
4-Needs Improvement	11.11%	13.04%
5-Poor	0.00%	17.39%

Similar to the shift that occurred with one's passion for the message, these results also indicate that an increased number of participants recognized that they need to nurture more ethos and grow more intentional about ensuring their messages help others.

One's Ability to Convey Memorable Messages

In relation to logos, when asked on the pre-session evaluation if one conveys a memorable message (question 6), nearly two thirds (66.67 percent) rated themselves as “average,” while only 22 percent rated themselves as “good.”¹⁷ However, once again, the post-session results indicated movement toward “good” (43.48 percent), which indicates

¹⁶ See Appendix M, “Post-session Survey.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

improvements in message delivery, and the number of those who recognize their need to improve nearly doubled to 21.74 percent. These changes reflect that the lab helped some participants to improve, while for others, the lab helped them to gain an awareness of their need to improve their skills.

Table 3: Conveys a Memorable Message

<i>Conveys a Memorable Message</i>	<i>Pretest Results</i>	<i>Posttest Results</i>
1-Excellent	0.00%	4.35%
2-Good	22.22%	43.48%
3-Average	66.67%	30.43%
4-Needs Improvement	11.11%	21.74%
5-Poor	0.00%	0.00%

Like the previous two examples, results show that participants grew more cognizant of their need to cultivate those skills that contribute to effective message delivery and are striving to do so.

The quantitative results reflect the Presenters Lab had a positive impact on the participants, in that the respondents indicated either improvement in or increased awareness of a need to improve in the communication competencies that were presented. This shift also denotes an increased level of understanding for the participants regarding the presented competencies and what they entail. Further, the greatest shifts in pre-session and post-session responses were in categories that most directly correlate to the elements of persuasion; ethos, pathos, and logos. This is an indication that the emphasis placed on these elements of persuasion was impactful on the participants.

Qualitative Results

To measure the participants' takeaways from the Presenters Lab, I asked each participant to write a brief reflective narrative. Participants were to write a two- to three-paragraph account that gives an overview of the labs and identifies the most helpful

information, those things they find most beneficial for moving forward in their improvement as a presenter.¹⁸ This tool provided a good sense of the personal value gained by each participant.

All responses from the participants indicated that they learned much, and all expressed gratitude for being asked to participate. The responses also indicate that the participants felt that the Presenters Lab achieved the stated goals. Many noted a new sense of awareness of the importance of what they, as presenters, are called to do. Many commented on gaining new information and insight, as well as being inspired by the Presenters Lab and having a new passion to grow as a communicator, as illustrated by the following comments:¹⁹

- “The intended goal was achieved using many well-rounded discussion points, topics, illustrations, video segments, and lectures.”
- “As a pastor and communicator at Meadowbrook Church, I feel I was given the tools and knowledge to reach my highest potential as a communicator and pastor.”
- “This was a great experience for me as a communicator. The way Pastor Tim explained and taught everything showed me great insight that I will use for a lifetime.”
- “This Presenters Lab helped stir in me a greater passion and value for communicating. It gave a full and complete view of all that presenting is and can be when done in an intentional, loving, and authentic way.”
- “Participating in Presenters Lab helped me to view communicating in a whole new light. I recognized that communicating is serving. As a speaker, I need to be a giver and not a taker which brings a new weight to communicating. The goal is transformation not just information. This means to communicate effectively I must be very intentional in how I prepare myself and my message.”

¹⁸ See Appendix N, “Presenters Lab Overviews.”

¹⁹ See Appendix O, “Qualitative Results.”

Based on the comments from the overviews provided by the participants, the qualitative results remain positive and indicate a successful and beneficial project.

The Project's Contribution to Ministry

Meadowbrook staff pastors, leaders, and presenters expressed that they notably improved in their knowledge, skills, and awareness as communicators through their experience in the Presenters Lab. Consequently, their ability ongoing to convey the life-giving message of Scripture in engaging ways will impact individuals, families, and the community as people come to faith and grow as believers. More specifically, as these pastors apply their new-found knowledge, skills, and awareness gained through the Presenters Lab, they will lead others better through effective communication, and they will increase their overall ability, effectiveness, and confidence as leaders. They will continue to realize that they must prioritize growing in effective Christ-like communication as a vital component of leadership skills.

As a result, leaders who communicate with clarity and conciseness are leaders who people enjoy the following of others. Improvements in communication and leadership skills will boost morale and efficiency in all aspects of effective ministry. Leaders and presenters who intentionally grow and improve their ability to communicate directly and indirectly will create a culture of growth, which will inspire others to improve as communicators. This will benefit the health of the church as it moves toward more fruitful ministry.

Beyond Meadowbrook Church, the Presenters Lab concept serves as a model for improving communication for pastors, ministers, and leaders within other churches and ministries. It raises awareness for church and ministry leaders that they need to prioritize

effective communication, which will directly benefit their ministries and further the kingdom of God. It also serves as a warning that poor communication can not only hinder the gospel message, but it also hinders one's ability to lead.

The project also demonstrates that the sharing of the gospel effectively requires engaging the three modes of rhetoric and persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. The Gospel accounts of Jesus and His effectiveness in reaching His audiences, along with the video clips of superb yet diverse speakers shown in the labs and the ensuing analyses and participant discussion, illustrate that these three modes of rhetoric and their corresponding elements of effective communication remain vital for connecting to one's audience. The project shows that authentic and skilled speakers can engage their audience and thus share a variety of messages, both within the church and the marketplace.

CHAPTER 5: PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

This chapter provides a summative evaluation of the Presenters Lab ministry intervention project. This summary will evaluate the project and its overall effectiveness, identify areas for project improvement, identify the implications of the project, provide recommendations for Meadowbrook Church, and give suggestions for future studies. Finally, it will explore the perspectives gained from the biblical-theological and general literature reviews, along with the insights gleaned from developing and facilitating the field component of this project, the Presenters Lab.

Evaluation of the Project

This project addressed an observable problem in many ministry contexts, the need for improved communication skills and effectiveness as presenters of God's Word. I designed Presenters Lab to maximize the communication effectiveness of the ministers of Meadowbrook Church. The project informed the participants about the need to improve communication and the best practices utilized by leading contemporary communicators. It also helped them apply certain perspectives and practices gained from a thorough biblical-theological foundation.

The Presenters Lab project proved highly successful, and numerous factors contributed to its effectiveness. At the same time, however, the project would have benefited from a few key changes. Future iterations of this project would benefit from

noting the following strengths and weaknesses of the project and could include or adjust these components accordingly.

Keys to Project Effectiveness

An Obvious and Felt Need

Of the numerous aspects that contributed to this project's effectiveness, the most compelling was that the project addressed an obvious and felt need among participants. Every participant of the project had endured boring and lifeless sermons, lectures, seminars, and meetings, which had tested patience despite how useful and true the information might have been. They already knew that the problem lies primarily with the presenter, the one attempting to convey the message. With all the participants having experienced this frustration at some point, they already personally desired to avoid perpetrating the same mistake. As a result, each participant desired to improve and participated eagerly in the labs.

Personal Passion

Another key factor to project effectiveness came from the passion I possess for this topic, which infiltrated every aspect of the project and modeled to participants the pathos they need to cultivate in their communication. I remain driven to help ensure that others properly present the life-changing message of God's Word whenever pastors and teachers deliver it. Passion for excellence in communication is a personal conviction, a non-negotiable core value of mine. I cringe when I observe others mishandling and poorly delivering the greatest message on the planet. This leaves me dismayed and disheartened as subpar preparation and delivery of truth leaves hearers seemingly unaffected; however, such presentations ultimately do influence hearers.

Messages that lack passion and excellent delivery further desensitize listeners, leaving them less convinced of the extraordinary impact that God's truths can have in their lives. As the facilitator of this project, my passion saturated every part and moment of this project and demonstrated to project participants the pathos that should infuse each message they deliver. A similar passion remains vital to anyone who facilitates a project such as this.

Compelling Information

Another contributor of project effectiveness came from the highly compelling nature of the information given in the Presenters Lab. A wealth of captivating information resulted from a thorough examination of Scripture, an investigation of Jesus as a master communicator, a broad look at current research that included remarkable findings in the field of neuroscience as it relates to communication, and fascinating analysis of notable contemporary communicators. These elements combined to create a highly relevant and interesting project that thoroughly engaged Presenters Lab participants.

Setting and Format

Additionally, the physical setting where the project took place proved highly conducive to the format of Presenters Lab. The format, which included lecture, corresponding PowerPoint presentations, class discussion, feedback, times of question and answer, and video clips all contributed to making the sessions interesting, memorable, and informative. This format benefited from a perfectly suited room that provided the right size, location, ambience, available technology, and chair arrangement that proved advantageous to the weekly labs.

Participants as Lifelong Learners

The caliber and mindset of the participants made a major contribution to project effectiveness as well. They did not simply come as employees responding to some mandatory meetings conducted by the boss. Instead, they came as exceptional and growing leaders who have a hunger and commitment to lifelong learning. They came prepared and eager to learn, and quickly engaged in the information presented. Nearly all of them enthusiastically took notes and participated in times of discussion. Their attention and desire to improve remained palpable and contributed to the success of Presenters Lab.

Prayer

Finally, prayer, an element that cannot be undervalued, remained vital to the project's success. From the inception of the project, I have bathed this endeavor in prayer. Every session began and ended with heartfelt prayer that God would help us all to learn, apply, and improve as communicators. God helped and guided this process far more than I could have ever imagined. This project could have easily become bogged down in an ocean of information, leaving me feeling that the effort was futile. This did not happen, however. Instead, I sensed God prompting me and giving me insight. He helped me discover truth and facts, urgently compelling me that this project mattered and could make a difference.

Keys to Project Improvement

Adding a Phase Two to Presenters Lab

Among the aspects that could have improved this project, an increase in the number of weekly sessions would have greatly benefited the project. Given the amount of

information that I needed to cover during the Presenters Lab, I did not allot enough time during the weekly sessions to implement all the components of the labs that I had planned to do. At the beginning of Presenters Lab, I randomly assigned each participant a lab partner to do interactive application activities throughout the project; however, because of the limited time, I quickly discovered that I had to exclude these activities. I apologized to the group and explained that due to how the labs were unfolding, we would not use partners for application activities. I had to prioritize the information instead, which compromised practical application.

The time limitations also prevented video evaluations. I had intended to ask participants to each submit a video of themselves communicating in their ministry contexts. The participants would then observe and evaluate each presentation on the elements of effective communication that I taught during the labs. I also had planned to provide guidelines to ensure a positive, constructive tone during these critiques. This exercise would have effectively helped each participant improve as a communicator. However, this would have required an enormous amount of time, and I ended up having to exclude this as well.

Adding a second phase of Presenters Lab, then, would substantially improve this project. The second phase would include lab partner activities and would provide the time needed to do participant video critiques. These added components would more fully accomplish the purpose of this project.

Improved Measuring Tools

I had trouble finding a measurement tool or survey that was a good match for the project. As a result, I compiled a seventeen-question survey based on the main elements

of effective communication that I would present in the project. I administered the same survey both at the beginning of the first session and the end of the final session with the goal of measuring how much information the participants gained and how they had improved as communicators.

The statistician who analyzed the results of the given surveys noted no significant differences from the pre- to post-session evaluations. Also, a different number of participants took the pre-session test than took the post-session evaluation. This difference may have skewed the actual results. I regret that the surveys did not produce tangible metrics for measuring participant improvement. In retrospect, I should have sought help in crafting a better measurement tool and finding better means for administering these self-evaluations.

Implications of the Project

Preaching Impacts the Health of the Church

From the inception of this project to its completion, several obvious implications have arisen that deserve recognition and discussion. First, churches and preachers must realize and embrace the tremendous role effective preaching has for the health of the church. Some, from misplaced humility, downplay their role as a preacher and tend to minimize the process and practice of preaching, thereby limiting the potential effectiveness of their preaching. Others wrongly assume that the preacher must also be a leader, CEO, visionary, counselor, caregiver, bookkeeper, and the like, but such thinking diminishes the role of preaching as pastors end up having too many irons in the proverbial fire. With only so much time and energy, pastors spread themselves too thin and limit the potential effectiveness of their preaching. This project emphasizes the need

for ministers to refocus on the supreme weight of their calling to preach the Word.

Preaching the truths of God's Word remains one of the highest ways that one can serve God and humankind.

Poor Preaching Reflects Poorly on the Kingdom

Second, despite the countless number of incredibly effective preachers and teachers who serve the Kingdom well, this project reveals a public relations nightmare for the Kingdom. The sobering reality is that far too many ministers lack communication effectiveness. Throughout my life, I have painfully endured far too many boring and inept preachers. While not every minister fits this description, enough do that this problem desperately calls for preachers and churches to raise the standard of preaching. Preachers and teachers represent the front line of the advancement of the Kingdom, and they must close the gaping holes in that line.

Jesus not only had the greatest teachings ever uttered on this planet, He also set the standard and modeled the competencies for how He wanted these truths delivered. Jesus set a high standard. While people cannot meet the standard set by Him, it should inform one's efforts and development to reach ever higher as a communicator. This project focused on helping the minister find and practice the learnable and discernable skills utilized by Jesus and by effective communicators.

Ministers Must Commit to Continual Improvement

All of this leads to the greatest implication as it pertains to this project—the need for every minister, everywhere, to commit toward continual improvement as a communicator. Of course, no way exists to legislate or enforce such a commitment, but I remain hopeful that God will use this project to teach others to communicate effectively

for the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit moved upon me to commit myself to this project, and I know He will speak to others through it. He will use this project to motivate, inform, and guide others in the quest to raise the standard of Kingdom communicators.

**Recommendations to Seniors Pastors Everywhere,
and to the Pastors and Leaders of
Meadowbrook Church**

Prioritize a Communications Development Pipeline

Because preaching and teaching the Word of God remains incumbent upon senior pastors, they must prioritize the discovery and cultivation of skilled and effective communicators. Every senior or lead pastor should provide a type of communication development pipeline for the other leaders in the church, whether staff or lay leaders. Pastors can accomplish this by carefully creating a learning environment for skill development, one that provides a powerful and affirming personal touch. Developing the skills of other leaders in the church will also ensure that pastors strive to stay ahead of those they lead and become a living example for others to emulate.

Invest in the Communication
Skills of Staff Ministers

Further, pastors with multiple ministers on staff should make staff development in effective communication skills a priority. To lead with the long-range view in mind, senior pastors must actively invest in maximizing the abilities of their ministers in their charge. Communication matters in both the long-term and the immediate. Leaders must not only communicate effectively to teach and preach, they must do so to transfer vision and direction. The intentional focus of today determines the standard of the future. This means that pastors must place tomorrow's preachers, teachers, and leaders in the pipeline

today to receive training and gain exposure to the competencies needed for effective communication. The Presenters Lab concept could serve such an endeavor.

Continue in the Commitment to Grow

Serving God means serving people. The realization of this remains both sobering and motivating, and will serve to preserve and propel individuals in fruitful ministry. I encourage the pastors of Meadowbrook Church to continue in their demonstrated commitment to growing in their abilities as communicators, staying mindful of the great call God has given them. God has given the pastors of Meadowbrook the profound privilege to speak for God in this context. Meadowbrook pastors must never take lightly the task of communicating His message to people. Each one must humbly fulfill this role.

Read Avidly to Feed Intellect and Curiosity

I also recommend that all pastors and leaders of Meadowbrook Church read avidly. Reading feeds the intellect and the curiosity. Without nurturing and growth, individuals begin to stall. Reading exposes one to other's thoughts and paradigms. Such exposure fuels creativity and keeps one conditioned and open to change. As the world changes, so, too, does our audience. Meadowbrook Church must foster openness to accommodate the change. If ministers remain unaware and unconcerned by culture changes, they lose clarity and will struggle to connect their message with the surrounding culture. Though the message contains life-changing truth, ineffectual delivery of the message will prevent hearers from receiving and applying the truth. Consequently, life change will not occur. May it never become cliché that the message never changes but the methods do, because it is truth. Reading helps pastors navigate the changes in society and in the church, and it will profoundly inform how one preaches and teaches the Word.

Remain a Student of Communication

I also recommend that the pastors of Meadowbrook Church always remain a student of communication. As they go about their daily activities, they should note those who seem to communicate well and those who struggle to get their messages across. Observe communicators on television, YouTube, or video blogs. Beyond their message or their context lies the opportunity to observe others in the craft of communication. Observation exposes and expands communicators in their pursuit to grow and improve. Certainly, the goal does not center on judging or critiquing. Rather, the goal seeks to gather and glean, to sort and identify what makes others effective communicators.

Recommendations for Future Study

This project has provided an ample beginning point in addressing an observed ministry concern. Future study and development can further the effectiveness of the Presenters Lab concept. Development could include expanding labs to offer various application exercises that would greatly enhance the personal takeaway for each participant. In these exercises, participants would test and practice the learned concepts and would receive immediate and valuable feedback and evaluation. The development of these exercises would require more research and creativity to make the activities a worthwhile investment.

In terms of the general literature review, another suggested area of future study would explore in depth the numerous neuroscience studies that pertain to the brain's role in communication, both as speaker and listener. These fascinating studies may reveal even more ways to effectively deal with the physiological aspects impacting effective communication. This kind of quality scientific research would illuminate how the Creator

has wired the human brain to respond in heightened ways to certain elements of communication. Future research would educate and train communicators to best cooperate with and leverage how God has designed and equipped humankind for the communication process.

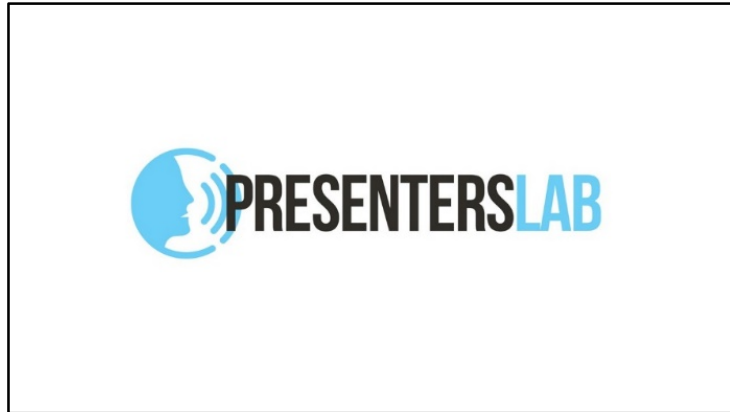
Both the biblical-theological review and general literature review briefly discussed the unique impact story has on listeners, but the use of stories deserves far more research, especially since stories remained Jesus's favorite communication tool. An expanded study on the parables of Jesus and their relationship to effective communication would yield great treasures for all growing communicators.

Conclusion

The research and subsequent project presented in this paper accomplished the desired goal of helping to motivate and further equip pastors and leaders to become more effective communicators. The biblical-theological review clearly demonstrates that God has always desired to communicate with His prized creation, humankind, and speaks to people through other people. Further, Scripture reveals Jesus as the master communicator, who provides preachers and teachers of the World with observable and learnable communication skills. In addition to this, the general literature review provides consensus on the traits of effective communications and illustrates the successful, modern application of these competencies. Finally, the Presenters Lab provided a practical means for sharing this valuable information in a seminar setting and revealing to participants the importance of growing effective communication skills. I remain hopeful that this project will serve as a template for other pastors and ministries to help raise the level of

preaching, teaching, and leading by helping ministers to become more effective communicators.

APPENDIX A: WEEK 1 POWERPOINT



Welcome!

Purpose

Experience

Evaluation

Engagement

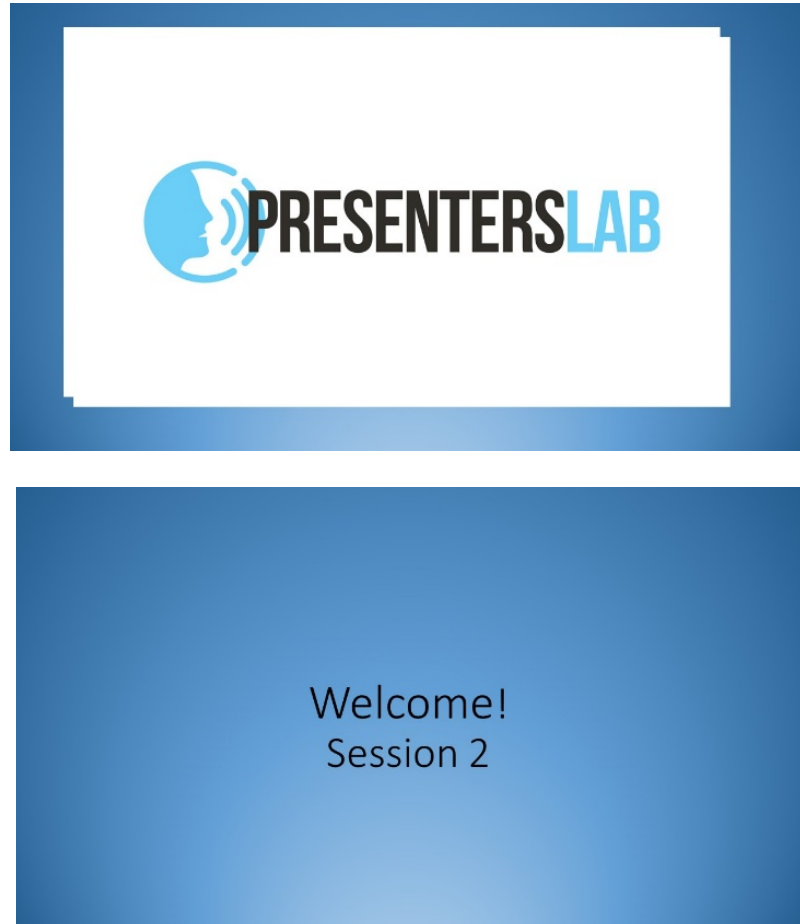
Christine Caine
Video Clip

Ravi Zacharias
Video Clip

Zig Ziglar
Video Clip

Authenticity

APPENDIX B: WEEK 2 POWERPOINT



Seeing Communication as Serving

Exegesis

Key Interpretation Skills of Biblical Texts

(2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV)

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Grammatico-Historical Exegesis

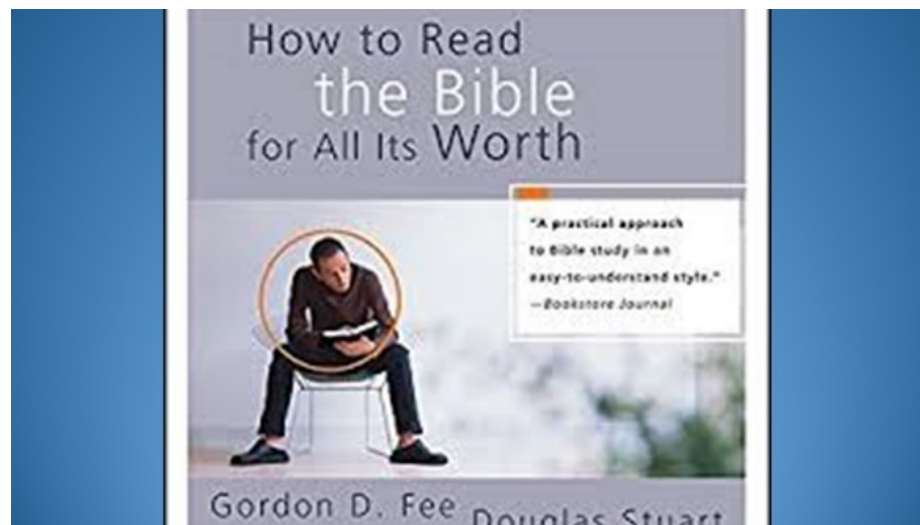
= interpret the text in the light of its historical origin and its grammar.

Tools

Bible Translations

- New King James Version (KJKV)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New Living Translation – Second Edition (NLT-SE)
- English Standard Version (ESV)

Commentaries



Logos Bible Software

Exegetical Guide

Presenter Elements

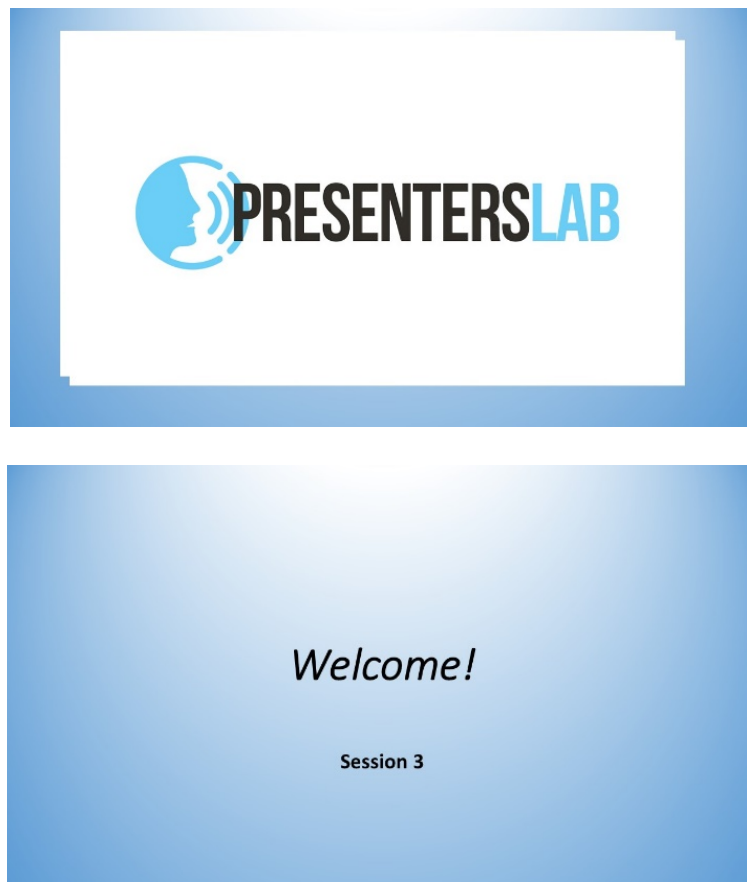
- Authenticity
- Passion
- Know Your Audience
- Stories
- Humor
- Loud & Clear
- Pace
- Pitch
- Articulate / Annunciate
- Body Language
- Clarity
- Brevity
- Prepared
- Questions

Beth Moore
Video Clip

Steven Furtick
Video Clip

Bishop T. D. Jakes
Video Clip

APPENDIX C: WEEK 3 POWERPOINT



The Messenger AND The Message

- When you understand the nature and scope of preaching, you will prepare yourself before you attempt to prepare your message.

- ***“If you are not moved by the incredible responsibility of preaching and teaching, you are not fit to engage yourself in it. To approach the delivery of scriptural instruction lazily or halfheartedly is to court the disfavor of the one who conceived it and desires its implementation not to mention that it endangers the immortal souls of all who receive it. To take up the eternal, unchangeable Word of the creator and sustainer of the universe and attempt to unfold its message for all to see, is a task that leaves the most seasoned preacher and teacher in “weakness and in fear and in much trembling”.***

Wallace, Andy (2013-04-02). Homiletics Handbook (pp. 13-14). Grace of Truth Publications.

The Messenger AND The Message

- When you understand the nature and scope of preaching, you will prepare yourself before you attempt to prepare your message.
- If you are not moved by the incredible responsibility of preaching and teaching, you are not fit to engage yourself in it.
- ***My main ministry is my spiritual progress.***

- (1 Timothy 4:12–16 NKJV)
- “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

- (Proverbs 10:17 AMP)
- “He who heeds instruction and correction is [not only himself] in the way of life [but also] is a way of life for others. And he who neglects or refuses reproof [not only himself] goes astray [but also] causes to err and is a path toward ruin for others.”

*My main ministry is...
my spiritual progress!*

Mind Your Mouth!!!

“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. (James 3:1-6 NIV)

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. **My brothers and sisters, this should not be.** 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water." (James 3:7-12 NIV)

Presenter Elements

- Authenticity
- Passion
- Know Your Audience
- Stories
- Humor
- Loud & Clear
- Pace
- Pitch
- Articulate / Annunciate
- Body Language
- Clarity
- Brevity
- Prepared
- Questions

Lab Partners

A precise definition, an icon, demonstrate it, do the opposite,
be creative!
Make us remember it!

Know Your Audience

Craig Groeschel
Video Clip

Michelle Obama
Video Clip

President Ronald Reagan
Video Clip

APPENDIX D: WEEK 4 POWERPOINT

Presenters Lab

Session 4

How to

- Talk Like Ted
- Preach Like Jesus



Ted Talks

Tech

Education

Design



Unleash the Master Within



Master the Art of Storytelling



**Have a
Conversation**



**Teach me
Something New**



**Deliver Jaw-
Dropping
Moments**



Lighten Up



**Stick to the 18
Minute Rule**



Paint a Mental Picture with Multisensory Experiences



Stay in Your Lane

APPENDIX E: THE PREACHER'S MANIFESTO

I am a preacher. I am a messenger of the most high God—an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

I am a herald of the greatest story ever told, and the best news ever received (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

I am a sinner, saved by grace—not through my works, but through Christ's work in me (Ephesians 2:8-9).

I am equipped with everything I need for the calling God has for my life (Ephesians 2:10).

I will preach the Gospel without shame (Romans 1: 16).

I will not settle for moralistic, therapeutic, feel-good, prosperity preaching (2 Timothy 4:2-3).

I will preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God's Word (Titus 2:1).

I will use the Bible as the firm foundation for all my messages (2 Timothy 2:15).

I will read the Bible more than best-sellers (Psalm 1).

I will study academically, but speak plainly for all to understand (Acts 15:19).

I will work to please God, not man (Galatians 1:10).

I will seek to be faithful, not famous (1 Samuel 12:24).

I will glorify God, not myself (1 Corinthians 10:31).

I will build up God's kingdom and His Church, not my own (Matthew 6:33).

I will live with the highest integrity—a life above reproach—so the Church won't get another black eye (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

I will practice what I preach (Matthew 23:3).

I will boast in my weakness, not my strength (2 Corinthians 12:9).

I will live in Biblical community, not isolation (Hebrews 10:24-25).

I will know and love my neighbors, not just my church members (Leviticus 19:18).

I will live, eat, and drink with sinners—like Jesus did—because it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick (Matthew 9:11-13).

I will prioritize the needs of my wife, sacrificing myself for her, so that ministry doesn't become my mistress (Ephesians 5:25).

I will spend quality time with my children, so they will grow to love the church, not hating it for taking their daddy (Ephesians 6:4).

I will honor the Sabbath and rest, knowing God is in control (Exodus 31:12-13).

I will circle my preaching in prayer, giving my anxiety to God (Philippians 4:6-7).

I will listen before I speak (James 1:19).

I will become all things to all people so that I might win as many as possible (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

I seek to serve, not to be served (Romans 12:3).

I will give before I receive, because I will reap what I sow (Galatians 6:7).

I will truly love people, not just pretend to love them (Romans 12:9-10).

I will preach with all I've got, holding nothing back (Jeremiah 20:9).

I will not back down, shut up, or shy away from speaking the truth (Acts 5:40-42).

I will preach hard truth with love (Ephesians 4:15).

I will hold firm to sound doctrine, no matter how unpopular it may be (Titus 1:9).

I will not waver in my faith in a big God who accomplishes big things through those who dare to act upon God-sized dreams (Ephesians 3:20).

I will not allow temptation and the Devil to gain a hold on me (James 4:7).

I will be a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

I will fight the good fight, keep the faith, and finish the race (2 Timothy 4:7).

I am a preacher. And, Lord willing, in the end, I will hear those words I so desperately long to hear: “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

APPENDIX F: WEEK 5 POWERPOINT



Glossophobia

- ▶ "Speech anxiety"
- ▶ Fear of Public Speaking

Top Fears

- ▶ Public Speaking
- ▶ Heights
- ▶ Bugs, snakes, etc.
- ▶ Drowning
- ▶ Blood, needles
- ▶ Claustrophobia
- ▶ Flying
- ▶ Clowns

Dealing with Nervousness


PREPARATION

PRACTICE

PERSEVERANCE

Do it afraid.

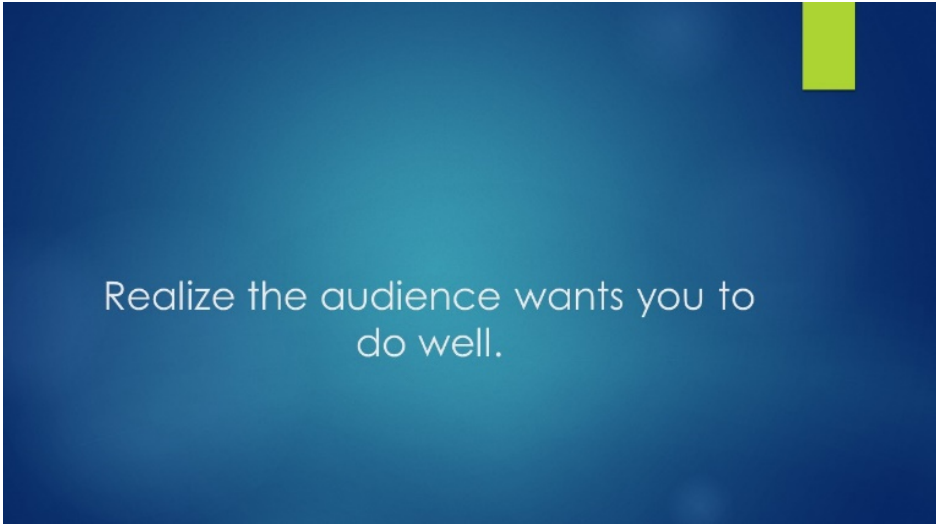
JOYCE MEYER




Arrive early and get comfortable
with the setting.



"teach people the Bible" not "teach
the Bible to people."
Andy Stanley



Realize the audience wants you to
do well.




Shift the focus from yourself.



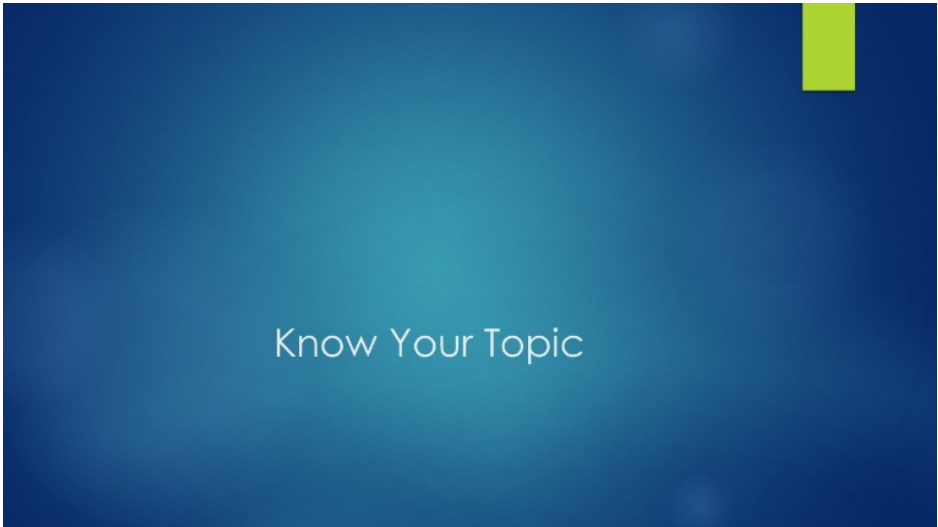
Pray specifically!



Slow down and use pauses.



BIG Smiles & Wide Eyes



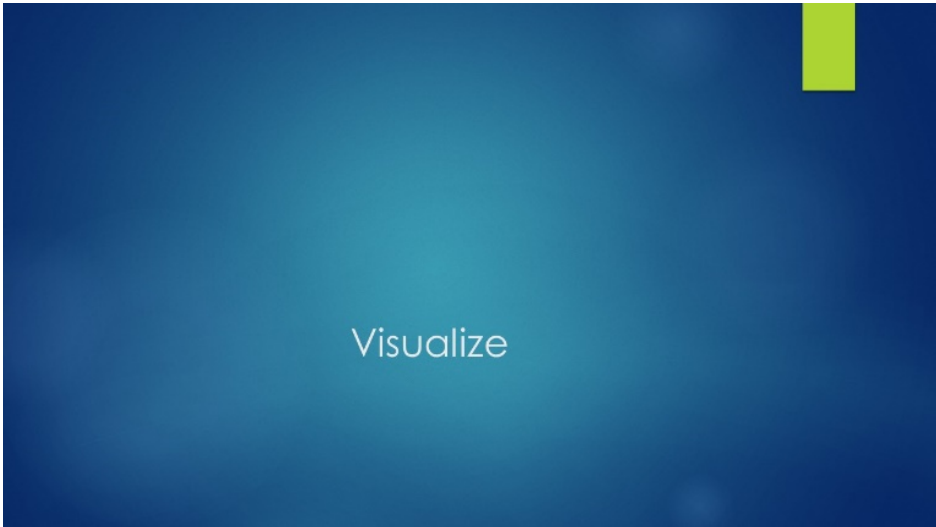
Know Your Topic



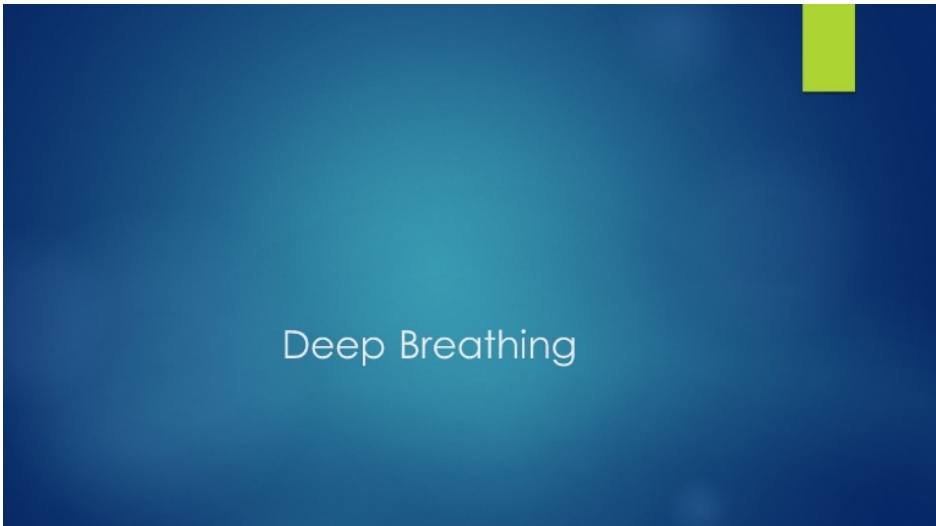
Get Organized



Practice, and then practice some
more!



Visualize




Deep Breathing

Don't be afraid of silence.

Go for it!
GOD IS WITH YOU!

The Life of the Preacher

- ▶ "What is preaching? Logic on fire! ...
Preaching is theology coming
through a man who is on fire."
—Martyn Lloyd-Jones



Preaching is more than eloquent
words and a crafted presentation.



“A prepared messenger is more
important than a prepared message.”
—Robert Munger



“My main ministry is my spiritual
progress.”

Only 1/ 3 of Preaching Is the Words
You Say.

The 3 Parts of Persuasion

The 3 Parts of Persuasion
RHETORIC – THE ART OF PERSUASIVE SPEAKING
ARISTOTLE – GREEK PHILOSOPHER

The 3 Parts of Persuasion

ETHOS **PATHOS** **LOGOS**

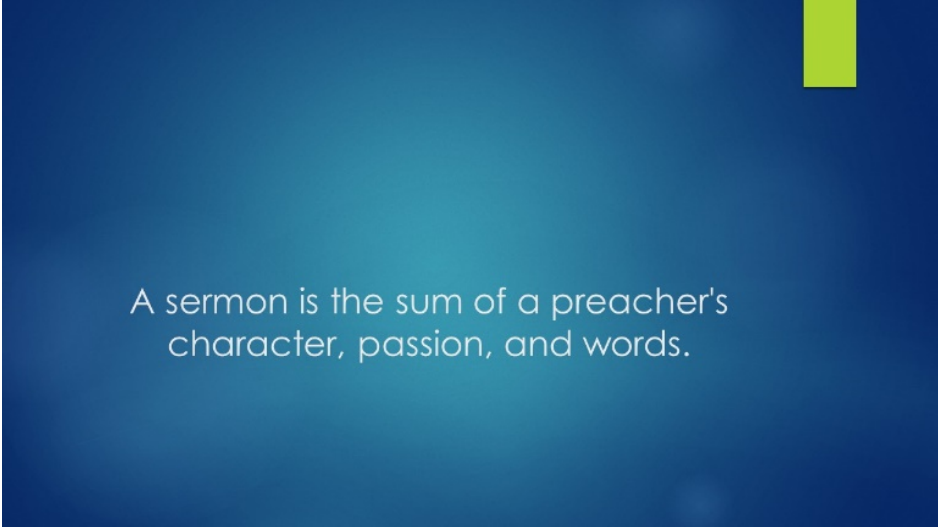
- Ethos = Character
- Pathos = Passion
- Logos = Words

Evaluating ethos, the audience asks, "How do you live?"

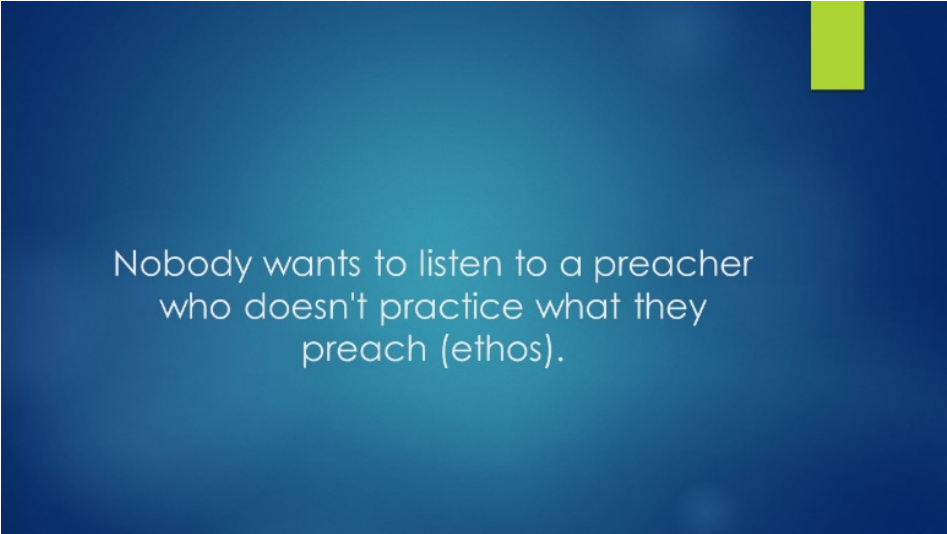
Evaluating pathos, the audience asks, "How do you feel?"

Evaluating logos, the audience asks, "How do you say it?"

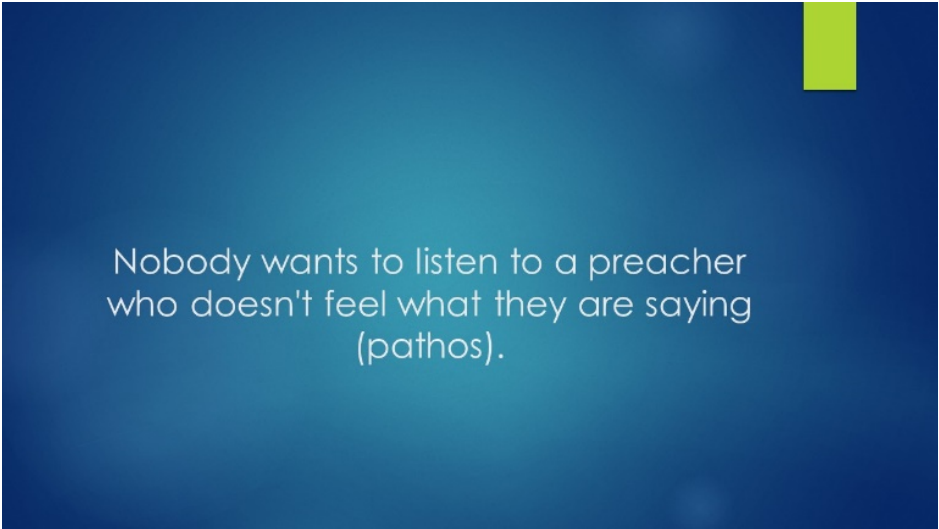
"our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake."
(1 Thessalonians 1: 5, ESV)




A sermon is the sum of a preacher's
character, passion, and words.




Nobody wants to listen to a preacher
who doesn't practice what they
preach (ethos).




Nobody wants to listen to a preacher
who doesn't feel what they are saying
(pathos).



Nobody wants to listen to a preacher
who fumbles with words (logos).




Only 1/ 3 of preaching is the words
you say. 2/ 3 is the person you are.



"Who you are speaks so loudly I can't
hear what you're saying."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson



“For they preach, but do not practice.” (Matthew 23: 3, ESV)



The Preacher's Manifesto



Eric Thomas
Video Clip

Steve Jobs
Video Clip

Bishop Dale Bronner
Video Clip

APPENDIX G: WEEK 6 POWERPOINT



Talk like Ted
Preach like Jesus

The Crowds loved to listen to Jesus!

- The large crowds listened to him with delight. (Mk.12:37 NIV)
- The large crowd enjoyed listening to Jesus teach. (Mk.12:37 CEV)

Do people “delight” in your messages?

Entertain

Capturing and holding the attention for an extended period of time.

Truth poorly delivered is ignored.

It is a sin to bore people with the Bible.

Rick Warren

When you teach God's Word in an
uninteresting way, people don't just
think you're boring...

...they think God is boring!

Jesus told stories to make a point.

(Matthew 13:34 CEV)

"Jesus used stories when he spoke to the people. In fact, he
did not tell them anything without using stories."

Reading from Thesis

Stories hold our attention.

“Wired for Story” Lisa Cron

- “Recent breakthroughs in neuroscience reveal that our brain is hardwired to respond to story; the pleasure we derive from a tale well told is nature’s way of seducing us into paying attention to it.”

Stories stir our emotions.

Stories help us remember.

Stories help to persuade.

Peter Guber

- Author, Producer (*Batman*, *The Color Purple*), Business Leader
- “As the noise level of modern life has become a cacophony, the ability to tell a purposeful story that can truly be heard is increasingly in demand.”
- “You have to reach people’s hearts as well as their minds, and this is just what story does.”

Good speakers tell stories;
Great speakers tell personal ones.

Talk like Ted

Master the Art of Storytelling

Preach like Jesus

Jesus was a Master Storyteller.
Stories were His favorite and most used technique.

Collect stories.

Allow time in your preparation
and practice for stories to
surface.

APPENDIX H: WEEK 7 POWERPOINT



When Jesus finished teaching, His audience was astonished (Matt.7:28).

- When many pastors and ministers today finish their teaching, however, too often the audience's responses differ starkly from what Jesus experienced.
- God has entrusted pastors and ministers with the greatest message on this planet.
- It remains imperative and possible to rediscover and revive both the heart of Jesus' message and His teaching methods.

Goal:
Life-change

Goal:
*My head and my heart to come
out of my mouth.*

Required

- Prepare with Focus
- Deliver with Clarity
- Speak with Power

Effective communicators know how to prepare a message with a singular and crystal clear focus.

If you know where you are going, you can take anyone with you.

Effective communicators know how to read an audience and are able to customize their presentation to make that audience want to listen.

Until the audience is engaged, communication has not taken place.

Effective communicators are passionate about their subject.

Effective Communicators make it
easy for their audience to respond.
Whether or not they do...they know what to do.

Effective communicators evaluate
themselves regularly.

Talk like Ted.
Preach like Jesus!

*"I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me **what** to say and **how** to say it."
(John 12:49 NLT)*

""The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."" (Luke 4:18-19 ESV)

Our central message must be
Good News!

Wise teachers start with the
audiences needs and interests...
*And move them toward the
truth!*

*...moving people from where they are
to where God wants them to be.*

Reticular Activating System

- Things you *value*
- Things that are *unique*
- Things that *threaten* you

We are called to communicate
truth...

*...but don't assume that everyone is eager to hear
truth.*

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst
of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and
harmless as doves.” (Matthew 10:16 NKJV)

MOST PEOPLE AREN'T LOOKING FOR
TRUTH...

...THEY'RE LOOKING FOR RELIEF!

“Speak only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”(Ephesians 4:29 NIV)

A tremendous help for sermon direction and study involves asking the right questions.

Instead of asking:
“What shall I preach this Sunday?”
Ask: “To whom will I be preaching?”

If you'd been in a car accident and were bleeding to death in the emergency room, how would you feel if the doctor came in and wanted to talk about the Greek word for "hospital" or the history of the stethoscope? All he said to you could be true, but irrelevant because it doesn't stop your hurt.

You would want the doctor to begin with your pain.

Goal: *Life-change!*

Bring God's truths and the real life needs of the people together through application.

APPENDIX I: WEEK 8 POWERPOINT



Thank you!!!

Talk like Ted
Preach like Jesus

Jesus related truth to life.

Goal: Life-change
Transformation, not just information.

Sermon on the Mount

- Beatitudes = keys to genuine happiness
- Living an exemplary lifestyle
- Controlling anger
- Restoring relationships
- Issues of adultery and divorce
- Keeping promises
- Returning good for evil
- How to pray
- Giving with the right attitude
- How to store up treasures in heaven
- How to overcome worry
- Not judging others
- Persistence
- Put into practice what you learn

“The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.”

D.L. Moody

“Sermons that teach people how to live will never lack an audience.”

Rick Warren

Jesus used simple language.

Jesus taught profound truths in
simple ways.
Not simple truths in profound ways.

Prepare with Focus.

Deliver with Clarity.

Speak with Power.

Power

It seems possible that one could emulate or even master all of the communication methods discussed in this paper, and any other techniques that go beyond the scope of this project, and still not achieve the desired goal of communication. Again, that goal is life-change. Is it indeed conceivable that one could as a minister or preacher have impeccable exegesis, fascinating stories, flawless rhythm and deliver a message that is virtually perfect in every other way, and there still be no life-change? Certainly. And often.

The one factor vitally necessary to truly convey this life-giving, life-changing message: *the presence of God's Spirit and the anointing to aid and empower the communicator.*

Jesus Himself states, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor"(Lk.4:18).

"...the anointing is God's power; it is His ability resting on us to do things easily that would otherwise be hard. It is impossible to minister without anointing. There can be hype without anointing, but there cannot be true ministry without anointing."

Joyce Meyer

"As I enter the pulpit, I wonder, "How can what I have prepared possibly feed so many?" My best sermons are little more than some fish and chips and at times are a bit greasy. Isn't it folly to believe that what I have in my hand could possibly meet the hunger s (sic) of an entire congregation? After you give it your best shot, when you do the most diligent exegesis you can do, when you have read the best commentaries and crafted your sermon with skill...

Face it: When you have done your utmost, it's simply not enough. At best, you have two small fish and five rolls. But you never have enough to feed the multitude. *Only Jesus Christ through His Spirit can do that.* You must give your sermon to Him. Preaching is ultimately His work."

Haddon Robinson

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."
(John 15:5)*

*“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”
(John 6:63 NKJV)*

Goal:
*My head and my heart to come
out of my mouth.*

Recap
Discussion – Q & A

Post-Session Survey

Prayer of Commitment

Thank you!!!

APPENDIX J: DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Comparison of Pre-session to Post-session Scores

Pre- and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations



Item	Time	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	Pretests	18	2.17	.857	.202
	Post-tests	23	2.57	1.502	.313
Q2	Pretests	18	2.56	.856	.202
	Post-tests	23	2.61	1.406	.293
Q3	Pretests	18	2.56	.705	.166
	Post-tests	23	2.57	1.161	.242
Q4	Pretests	18	2.06	.539	.127
	Post-tests	23	2.57	1.647	.343
Q5	Pretests	18	2.33	.970	.229
	Post-tests	23	2.65	1.301	.271
Q6	Pretests	18	2.89	.583	.137
	Post-tests	23	2.70	.876	.183
Q7	Pretests	18	2.61	1.037	.244
	Post-tests	23	2.52	1.377	.287
Q8	Pretests	18	1.94	.873	.206
	Post-tests	23	2.30	1.521	.317
Q9	Pretests	18	3.28	.752	.177
	Post-tests	23	3.00	.953	.199
Q10	Pretests	18	2.83	.707	.167
	Post-tests	23	2.87	1.140	.238
Q11	Pretests	18	2.39	.778	.183
	Post-tests	23	2.87	1.180	.246
Q12	Pretests	18	2.94	.873	.206
	Post-tests	23	2.87	.968	.202

Q13	Pretests	18	2.89	.832	.196
	Post-tests	23	2.87	.920	.192
Q14	Pretests	18	2.67	.907	.214
	Post-tests	23	2.57	.945	.197
Q15	Pretests	18	2.39	.608	.143
	Post-tests	23	2.70	1.146	.239
Q16	Pretests	18	2.50	.985	.232
	Post-tests	23	2.52	1.163	.242
Q17	Pretests	18	2.78	.548	.129
	Post-tests	23	2.74	.964	.201
Total	Pretests	18	43.78	12.26	2.89
	Post-tests	23	45.48	19.18	4.00

Comparison of Mean Scores for Pretests to Post-Tests

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Q1	-1.003	39	.322	-.399	.397	-1.202	.405
Q2	-.141	39	.889	-.053	.377	-.815	.709
Q3	-.031	39	.975	-.010	.311	-.639	.619
Q4	-1.258	39	.216	-.510	.405	-1.329	.310
Q5	-.867	39	.391	-.319	.368	-1.062	.425
Q6	.806	39	.425	.193	.240	-.292	.678
Q7	.229	39	.820	.089	.390	-.700	.879
Q8	-.894	39	.377	-.360	.403	-1.174	.454
Q9	1.013	39	.317	.278	.274	-.277	.832
Q10	-.118	39	.907	-.036	.307	-.657	.585
Q11	-1.492	39	.144	-.481	.322	-1.132	.171
Q12	.257	39	.799	.075	.292	-.516	.665
Q13	.070	39	.945	.019	.278	-.543	.581
Q14	.347	39	.730	.101	.292	-.490	.693
Q14	.347	39	.730	.101	.292	-.490	.693
Q15	-1.027	39	.311	-.307	.299	-.911	.298
Q16	-.063	39	.950	-.022	.343	-.715	.671
Q17	.152	39	.880	.039	.255	-.477	.554
Total	-.327	39	.745	-1.70	5.20	-12.22	8.82

APPENDIX K: PRESENTER’S LAB OVERVIEW

Marquise W.

“Children learn more from what you are than what you teach,” – W.E.B. Dubois. This quote alone explains why I enjoyed Presenter’s Lab as much as I did. I have had the privilege of being under Pastor Tim’s teachings for 19 years now, and he executes everything that he taught about in class during service each week. One of the things I enjoyed the most during Presenter’s Lab was the opportunity for the crowd to ask questions. Personally, I am not a person to ask questions during the Q&A portion, and I, unfortunately, had to join class online because I was unable to be there physically in class. For this reason, I am fortunate that so many great questions were asked and that Pastor Tim answered these questions wisely and without making the person asking the question feel insecure.

During one of Pastor Tim’s Presenter’s Lab, somebody asked, “In the Bible why doesn’t it specify the character of the person. Like in parables why doesn’t Jesus tell the crowd who they are in the story.” This made my gears turn and wonder the same thing. The person also mentioned the parable of the Good Samaritan and stated, “Most of us will hear the story and believe that we are the Good Samaritan but if we were honest we’re most likely one of the people who passed by.” I believe the reason Jesus never specified who we are in His parables is that He wants us to check our hearts. Jesus’s parables tell us what we should do, how we should act, and how to steward what God has given us. Then it’s up to us to search our hearts and ask the hard questions such as, “Am I the good Samaritan, or have I been passing by the people who need me the most?”

John G.

Participating in Presenter’s Lab helped me to view communicating in a whole new light. I recognized that communicating is serving. As a speaker, I need to be a giver and not a taker, which brings a new weight to communicating. The goal is transformation, not just information. This means to communicate effectively, I must be very intentional in how I prepare myself and my message. Bottom line: talk like Ted, preach like Jesus.

Probably the biggest take away for me personally was the importance of preparation and brevity. I get sidetracked easily. I find that passionate communicating comes naturally to me; however, if I can’t drive home the bottom line of my message, then it’s just hot air.

As was stated in the lab, “If you can’t explain it simply, then you don’t understand it well enough.”

Overall, this Presenter’s Lab helped stir in me a greater passion and value for communicating. It gave a full and complete view of all that presenting is and can be when done in an intentional, loving and authentic way.

Ryan F.

The Presenter’s Lab conducted and lectured by Pastor Tim Gilligan took place over a span of 8 sessions approximately 1 hour each. The focus of these labs was to assist in sharpening the presenting skills of various staff at Meadowbrook Church. The intended goal was achieved using many well-rounded discussion points, topics, illustrations, video segments and lectures.

The main point of all 8 sessions was to: talk like TED and preach like Jesus. Additional topics included using the Sermon on the Mount as an illustration to this end, recognizing life change as the goal of communicating, preparation and rehearsal, how Jesus told stories to make a point, glossophobia, what the life of a preacher looks like, 14 elements of presenting that Jesus used, authenticity, seeing communication as serving, exegesis, presenter elements, knowing your audience, and the 9 TED elements.

Tony C.

As a pastor and communicator at Meadowbrook Church, I feel I was given the tools and knowledge to reach my highest potential as a communicator and pastor. If the setting is one or a thousand, the presenter’s elements help strengthen and sharpen my communication skills.

Stories, one of the fourteen presenter elements, has a large impact on my communication skills. I am more effective as a communicator when I have the chance to use my own personal story. Sharing that story allows me to be more passionate, relate well, and break down barriers with the audience. I can tell people that Jesus changes lives, or I can walk them through a life changed by Jesus. The second holds more weight and connects to people’s pain and need.

I especially enjoyed session 6. Pastor Tim stated, “Wise teachers start with the audiences needs and interests. Then you move them towards the truth. Moving people from where they are to where God wants them to be.” This statement challenges the communicator to know the audience he or she is communicating to and most importantly the “Truth” they are going to deliver to address the need. Once the truth is spoken and that need is filled, people are open to more truth. This also goes a long way to building a relationship and gaining trust with your audience.

In closing, we have the greatest message in the world to give to our audience, the message of Jesus. I feel empowered and stretched to make sure I am taking every step to communicate to the best of my ability. Using all the tools taught through this Presenter's Lab I feel this is an achievable goal.

Luis C.

There were so many interesting things that I learned during Presenter's Lab that I could utilize within my current role. Among these are the nine elements on "How to talk like TED and preach like Jesus." During this session of the lab, I learned the importance of "unleashing the master within" and how passion is not only contagious but magnetic. I also learned that while communicating I should use a conversational tone, use my mannerisms, tone, pitch, and pace to highlight words and phrases I want my audience to capture and decode easily. I am currently working on the skill of being calm and precise while communicating. I tend to let my emotions, including my audience's thoughts get the best of me. However, I am now utilizing the awareness of my audience as well as their thoughts to carefully craft and perfect the art of storytelling. Storytelling and the role it plays in communicating effectively is one of the most significant elements I learned in this Presenter's Lab.

Stories are a vehicle for passion. They connect us and help break down our audience's defenses. Storytelling allows for emotional responses which help the communicator build trust and close the distance with the audience. A memorable phrase that was mentioned during this lab was, "It's hard to hate up close." This is a phrase that will remain with me as I continue to perfect my craft. I also enjoyed learning about the "learned versus lived" paradigm involving storytelling. In order to teach my listener something, I have to share and connect others to what we both have lived. Finally, I will always remember that good speakers tell stories but great speakers tell personal ones.

Under the session involving Preaching like Jesus, I learned about the reticular activating system and the three components that can cause us to shift focus or help us focus more intently on something. I am now conscientious of the importance of tying my message to things my audience values, are unique, or may pose a threat to them. All these factors will help me maximize my audience's attention and facilitate the delivery of my message. Also in this session, there were two phrases that were mentioned that have helped frame my preparation and approach while communicating. The first one is, "We are called to communicate truth... but don't assume that everyone is eager to hear truth." The second phrase, "Most people aren't looking for truth... they're looking for relief." These phrases have reminded me that the content of my message revolves more around what my audience needs to hear than what I want to say. I have recently implemented a weekly intentional time of reflection to evaluate and weigh the content of what I must communicate. This has helped me develop the right mindset and utilize proper discernment while preparing for my audience.

These are only some of the things I learned during this Presenter's Lab. Overall, I feel more knowledgeable and better equipped to communicate in different venues. I am so glad I could be a part of this training.

Joe G.

In a world that is overwhelmed with information, a clear and precise message is needed more than ever. Over an eight-week course, Pastor Tim covered valuable information to improving the way we communicate as presenters. The goal of the course was to equip presenters and help them get to a place of talking like Ted and teaching like Jesus. I have personally made this a goal in my life. As I adventure to apply all that was learned over the course, I realized that presenting goes beyond the stage. Every day we are presenting in daily conversations with friends, co-workers, family, and neighbors.

There are many elements that play a role in the goal of achieving clear communication: know your audience, the use of humor, the pace, and the art of storytelling. This covers just a few important details in becoming an effective presenter. All of the elements start with me as the presenter. The importance of preparation is key to being authentic, confident, and clear. When I am well prepared, my passion can shine and I can be more aware of prompts from the Holy Spirit during the delivery. This preparation helps speak heart to heart and not just head to head. I am grateful to be part of this Presenter's Lab and look forward to continue growth as an effective presenter.

Sheri Q.

Once again, I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of your doctoral project and sit under your direction on this vital skill of communication. While "lab" denotes practice in front of peers and is a scary thought, it is putting what you learn into practice that solidifies the concepts and allows for constructive critique. My goal is always for my head and my heart to come out of my mouth. Some do it naturally, I wish it was so for me. Talking about the presenter elements and then identifying them in videos of various speakers was eye opening and beneficial. We are all wired differently, and it's ok to be you, full of God.

I think the big take away from the labs for me was the realization of responsibility. You said, "If you are not moved by the incredible responsibility of preaching and teaching you are not fit to engage in it." For those in ministry, a heart and love for the people will motivate us to get it right. I can be spontaneous, but when it comes to presenting, whether in word or worship, I have to prepare. I was glad to hear you say the Holy Spirit is absolutely in the preparation and knows what will be needed for the moment in which you are preparing.

In some respect, I feel as if I am just getting started in all that God has prepared and wired in me. That excites me as I continue to lead, serve, and become a better presenter.

Tim N.

Presenters Lab was an 8-session course about becoming a better communicator. The mantra for the labs was, “Talk like Ted, Preach like Jesus.” Ted Talks are known for having 9 elements in each talk, and we spent a couple labs discussing those items. Some of my favorite element topics were: master the art of storytelling, jaw dropping moments, and teach me something new. With these and the other elements, we can be more clear in our presentation and capture our audience’s attention. I feel that these are areas that I can personally grow in as a communicator.

The second half of our focus was preaching like Jesus. One of those elements was communicating with truth. Most people aren’t looking for truth, they are looking for relief. When we address their felt needs with truth, they are open to more truth. For instance, we see stories in the Bible when people felt their needs met (blindness, sickness, hunger), then they were open to Jesus’ preaching. This applies to the presenter in that we need to not only know our audience’s felt needs, but make sure that we acknowledge those and preach to them.

I thoroughly enjoyed Presenters Labs this season. I felt equipped to be a better communicator, with better focus, and tools for preparation. I look forward to the next season.

Nick M.

As a communicator, I am constantly trying to improve my skills in order to better serve those whom God has entrusted to my care. Several mechanisms have proven beneficial in this endeavor. Reading books on the subject has increased my understanding of communication theory and watching videos of other communicators has shown me how to implement important communication elements in a practical manner. However, these tools fall utterly short when they are compared to the value of a course such as Presenter’s Lab.

The course was rich with content that was both theologically thought-provoking and helpful in practical implementation. One of my personal favorite sessions was based on the topic, “Talk Like Ted, Preach Like Jesus.” In this session, we discussed important themes of communication including: the importance of passion for the subject matter, mastering the art of storytelling, and delivering jaw-dropping moments. Indeed, the content for this course was helpful, challenging, and encouraging. However, what impacted me the most was not what was spoken but who was speaking.

Pastor Tim’s stellar preaching and teaching résumé is simply difficult to match. For twenty-eight years, he has led Meadowbrook Church from a small gathering in a hotel

ballroom into what it is today, one of the great churches in America. What matters most to me is not whether someone knows the content but whether someone applies the content. Week in and week out I have a front row seat to learn from a master communicator. Class is in session for me every Sunday as I witness a man that not only knows how he should preach but does it with excellence and consistency. He does all of this with the end goal that all of God's people, every single one of them, are helped.

Herran Y.

During my recent participation in Pastor Tim Gilligan's Presenters Lab, I was reminded and educated on how vital it is to communicate the message of Jesus Christ in an effective manner. Though the class had various crucial points, the three ingredients which impacted the most are hope, believability, and ministerial ethics.

Any gospel message that is presented must have a way of escaping the pressure and condemnation which comes by disobeying God. There are consequences for sin, but God through Jesus Christ extends *hope* through a covenant based on grace and love. Restoration to God is the target of the gospel.

Secondly, is the message believable and not only doctrinal. The connection with a person or an auditorium full of people, is found in the link between the message to the presenter (life experience) and the audience finding themselves within the story line. These keys lead people to apply the message and not just hear the message. Believability makes a message authentic and applicable.

Finally, the biblical character of the messenger, not only the charisma, is what gives the messenger confidence that God is with him/her during the presentation. A life of submission to God assures the presenter that the Holy Spirit will confirm the message (Word of God) with corresponding action with the hearts of the congregation.

Ricardo Z.

Over the last eight weeks, Pastor Tim Gilligan has led us staff and pastors, the "communicators" at Meadowbrook Church, in a very informative lab. The focus areas of the labs were divided into five categories, experience, exegesis, exposure, evaluation and engagement. We also learned of several critical elements of communication that if learned and executed, results in great communication skills. Those are authenticity, passion, knowing your audience, stories, humor, pace, pitch, enunciation, body language, clarity, brevity, preparation, and questions.

What I found myself most impacted by during the Presenter's Lab was getting an understanding that we must communicate with a "givers" motive. Givers communicate out of love, grace, gratitude, compassion, and overflow. This statement has resonated with me greatly because I like to consider myself someone who loves to give, whether

it's through physical, tangible resources, my time, or my attention. This thought process has acted as a motivational tool to continually desire to improve in my communication skills.

Sean F.

One of my life goals is to be a life-long learner. The Presenter's Lab offered a valuable learning opportunity that has proven vital to me over these last eight weeks, and will continue to be instrumental in my growth as a communicator. The format of instruction, observation, and discussion helped give me a good understanding of the importance of effective communication.

One of the topics discussed was on effective story telling. When a communicator tells a story he experienced and relates it to something the audience has experienced, there is a deeper connection that takes place. When this happens, it moves information from a mind connection to a heart connection causing the point to be memorable. I've become more aware of the importance of storytelling and have begun to organize stories from my life.

John M.

I have really enjoyed being able to participate in the Presenter's Lab and I have learned a lot. It goes to show, you can always learn something and we should be life-long learners. How we present ourselves to others has a great impact on how they receive the message we are trying to convey. We do not want to get in the way of the message, but instead make the message clear so that they will understand it.

It is important that we be ourselves and try not to imitate anyone else. God has imparted different gifts and talents inside each of us that are unique and we should share in our own individual way. Also, we need to know the audience to whom we are speaking. By identifying the age, gender, and ethnicity we can better relate to them.

While presenting a message, we need to know our facts, speak clearly, and get to the point. Also, we need to watch our tone and movement. People listen with more than just their ears; they use their eyes too. Finally, we need to dress appropriately. We need to look in the mirror to be sure that we are neat, clean, and pressed. Nothing should get in the way of the message, even our clothes which could be a distraction.

I plan to use these reference tips for the next opportunity to speak before an audience. This will help me to go to that next level of excellence and ensure that the message is heard and understood in the way that it is delivered.

Ron H.

The Presenters Lab has helped me to realize that there are many important check points in a presentation that need to be included if I want my talk to be effective to those who are listening. I never realized the importance of some of these before; however, I realize that you, Pastor Tim, have been using these all along in preparing your messages. That is why, after one of your Sunday messages, so many in the congregation will believe that “This one was just for me.” It is important to learn these points that will help in making each presentation one that God can use in the lives of His people.

One of the points that was most important to me was in the presentation about spending more time in prayer and preparation. This helps to develop a presentation that is interesting and relevant, while making the point clear so that it will always be remembered. Another point was to practice speaking. This is a very interesting and new thought to me. The emphasis is in practicing until it becomes natural and the passion behind the message is easily felt.

Finally, I feel it is an important point for me to learn how to speak so that people will want to listen. I will be working on making my presentations interesting with illustrations and humor. I feel that a good presentation is one that ministers truth to people and gives them something to take away. I now realize this takes prayer, planning, a lot of preparation and practice.

I plan to put each of these points into practice immediately so that I can make a greater impact for the Kingdom. Thank you for teaching us these points.

Bert T.

My overall assessment of the lab was that it was informative and inspirational. I have known for years about Pastor Tim’s passion for study and preparations. It was extremely valuable to see the nuts and bolts of his preparation procedure. The spiritual disciplines that should be a part of our daily lives were showcased during this lab.

I also found it very liberating to be able to stay within the boundaries of who I am as a presenter. This freedom allows us to pursue our audience freely and authentically. This also allows us to be real with our audience which also greatly enhances our ability to relate to and with them. This lab will help me maximize the platform that I have been given.

Daniel M.

Presenters Lab for Pastor Tim Gilligan’s doctoral program was a great experience for me as a communicator. The way Pastor Tim explained and taught everything showed me great insight that I will use for a lifetime. One of his main ideologies that stuck out to me

was “Talk like Ted, but Preach like Jesus.” This is an incredible reminder that as a communicator in a church, I need to talk like a Ted Talk with great insight but easy to follow, and I need to Preach like Jesus with the power and the authority and storytelling capabilities He, as God, brings.

This lab was a great reminder of many thoughts I already knew as a communicator, but I also learned many new ideas, thoughts, and pathways to becoming an excellent communicator. I loved learning techniques ranging from pre-speaking, what to do while speaking, and how to review yourself after a speaking engagement. A couple of areas in which Pastor Tim made me realize that I need to work on as a communicator are in the areas of storytelling, enunciating words, clarity, and pace. I will be working on these to become the best communicator I can be. Pastor Tim’s Presenters Lab has helped me tremendously as a communicator.

Izu A.

As a communication major in college, I had the privilege of being taught by many great presenters. I remember my favorite communications professor telling the class that the best presenters are the ones that you can tell authentically care about the people they are presenting to as much as the topic they are presenting. I was reminded of that memory from college during the very first Presenter’s Lab because I could tell just how much Pastor Tim wanted us to succeed as presenters. The passion was evident in the preparation he put into his presentations, the tone of his voice, and the amount of time he was willing to put into the entire process with us.

I took extensive notes during each lab because of the good content. What stood out to me the most has really changed the way that I prepare for presentations. Pastor Tim said, “If communicators teach out of need insecurity, ego, or even responsibility, they are NOT giving.” As a young communicator, I often feel the pressure to “perform well.” This creates a false need to have “wow” moments during presentations. I have always wanted people to say, “You did a great job,” or “You killed it, man!” I thought that I needed that to validate myself as a competent communicator. But what I took from Pastor Tim Gilligan’s Presenter’s Lab is that great communicators leave people feeling like they got something and not like they had to give. As he said, “Givers teach out of love, grace, compassion, gratitude, and the overflow.”

Pam T.

When I heard we were going to participate in Presenter’s Lab, I wondered how this was going to apply to me. At first, I thought that since I do not present on the platform that the information would be very good but would it be relevant in how I did my presentations in other settings? Each week you unfolded a new topic and then had us watch three people presenting, which helped me see how people are all different in their presentations. It also showed me how all formats were acceptable. This really helped me to see that many times my audience changes. Daily I switch from talking to leaders in our ministry to

meeting with a family who is hurting. It reminds me that it is very crucial to know my audience.

The Presenter's Lab examples have been such an eye-opening experience for me. I truly believe it has changed my perspective. I have known that there are various techniques to use in presenting, but I never really focused on them before. When you began to list things like recognizing my audience, watching my pitch, and seeing that it was ok to be authentically me, it freed me to be who I am and I am not left trying to impersonate others.

Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge with us. I think as I study to formulate what I want to say and practice, I will have a sense of confidence that I can truly be a better presenter and make a greater impact in people's lives for the Kingdom.

Susan R.

Presenter's Lab was informative, relevant, and applicable. Thank you for allowing me to attend and glean from your years of experience and expertise, and for the honor of participating in one small portion of your journey toward your doctorate. As always, you were prepared, inspiring, and passionate about your subject; you "practice what you preach" and deliver every thought with clarity, authenticity and intentionality.

My biggest take-away from the lab was the reminder to "be myself full of God." Reviewing other speakers and openly discussing why their style is effective (even though they all had very different styles) was both encouraging and empowering; realizing anew that God created each of us uniquely was refreshing and engaging. While there are times I'm more open to receive from speakers, I was reminded that every speaker you introduced has been commissioned by God to live out their calling in the personality/delivery mode they have co-labored with Him to develop. Honestly, I like listening to everyone you introduced, although there are times that I embrace their style/delivery more easily.

I thrive off challenges and found your content both challenging and motivating. I'm looking forward to honing my delivery skills while communicating in all contexts. Thanks again for the opportunity to learn and develop these concepts and integrate them into my skill set so I am more effective and prepared to help people move from where they are to where God wants them to be.

Natalie E.

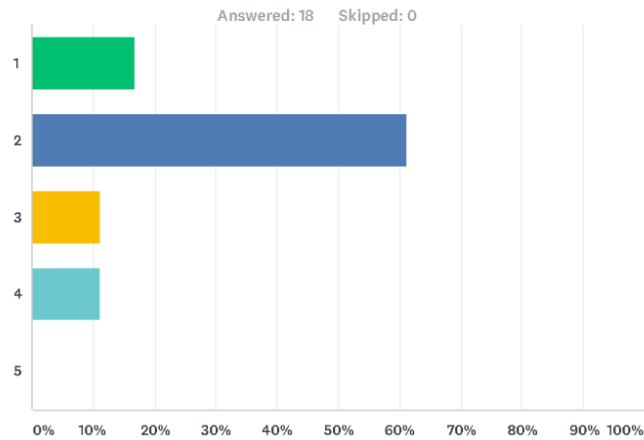
I was excited for the opportunity to be invited to sit under and receive some extra teaching from Pastor Tim. I enjoyed the "Ted Talks" analogy intertwined throughout the labs and exploring the *Talk like Ted, Preach like Jesus* theme. The labs felt like a slowing down and closer examining of *why* what we do is so important as well as how to

do it better. I think in today's culture it is much more necessary to stay relevant, anchored, and healthy when presenting the Word of God.

I thoroughly enjoyed studying the different elements of presenting, observing, and analyzing other speakers and reflecting on the application of techniques within my own teaching. The lab helped encourage me to do more research on my own and sharpen my presenter element tools of how to become a more effective and memorable speaker. I would love to be a part of more Presenters Lab in the future. Pastor Tim did a thorough and wonderful job!

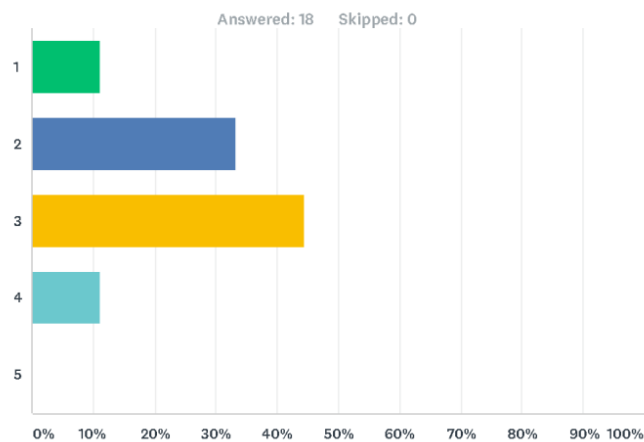
APPENDIX L: PRE-SESSION EVALUATION

Q1 Intentional about your message helping someone.



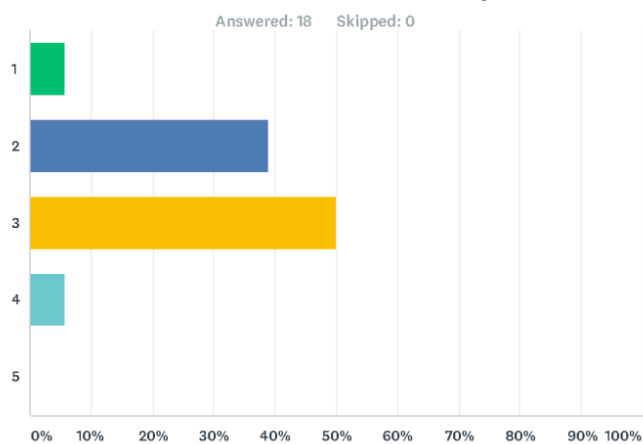
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	16.67%	3
2	61.11%	11
3	11.11%	2
4	11.11%	2
5	0.00%	0
Total		18

Q2 Careful about “how” you say what you say.



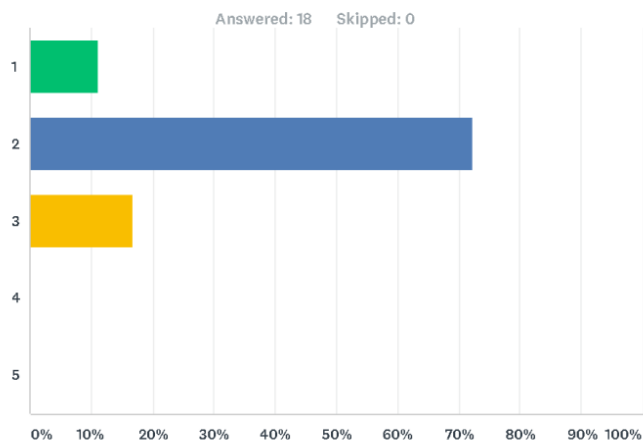
Answer Choices	Responses
1	11.11% 2
2	33.33% 6
3	44.44% 8
4	11.11% 2
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q3 Use of inflection and facial expressions.



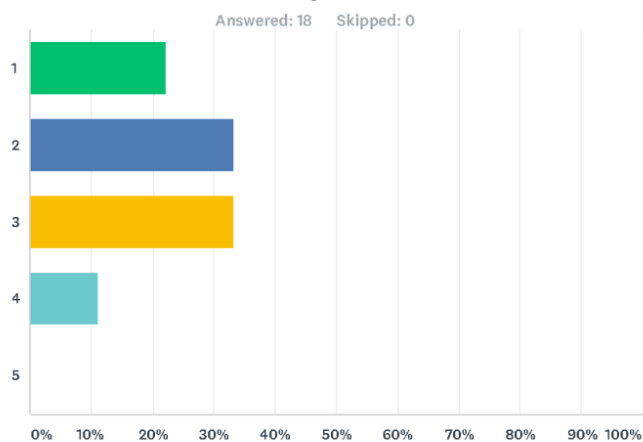
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	38.89% 7
3	50.00% 9
4	5.56% 1
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q4 Reflects a passion for the message you are presenting.



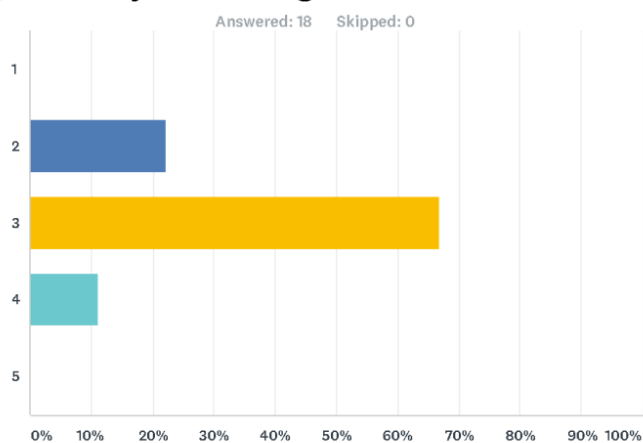
Answer Choices	Responses
1	11.11% 2
2	72.22% 13
3	16.67% 3
4	0.00% 0
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q5 Aware of who your audience is.



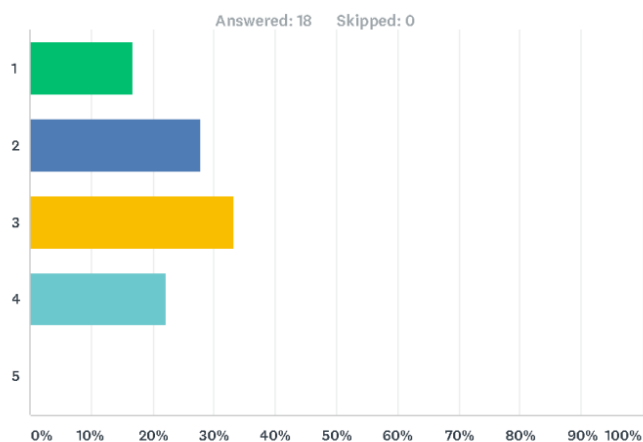
Answer Choices	Responses
1	22.22% 4
2	33.33% 6
3	33.33% 6
4	11.11% 2
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q6 Conveys a message that is memorable.



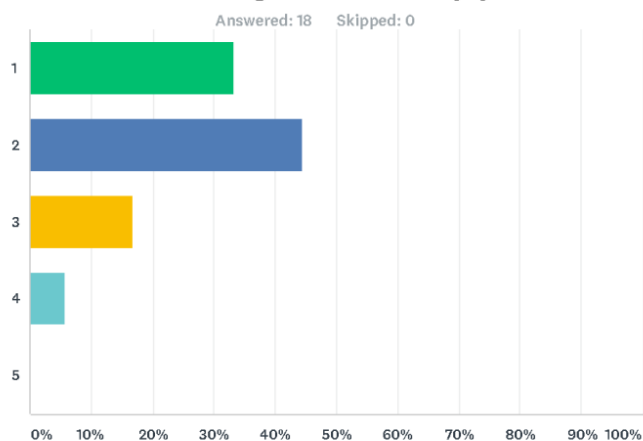
Answer Choices	Responses
1	0.00% 0
2	22.22% 4
3	66.67% 12
4	11.11% 2
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q7 Uses stories.



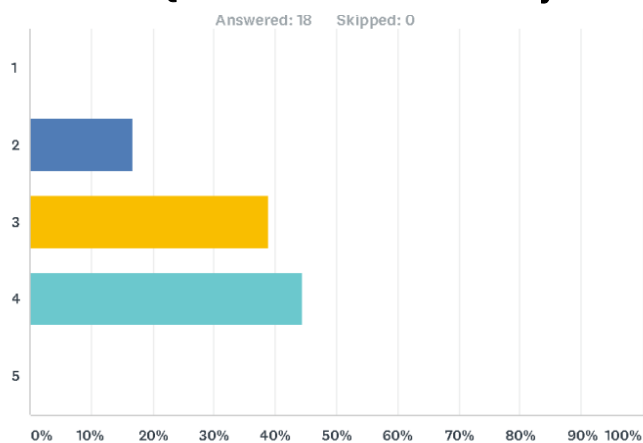
Answer Choices	Responses
1	16.67% 3
2	27.78% 5
3	33.33% 6
4	22.22% 4
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q8 Considered as being authentic by your audience.



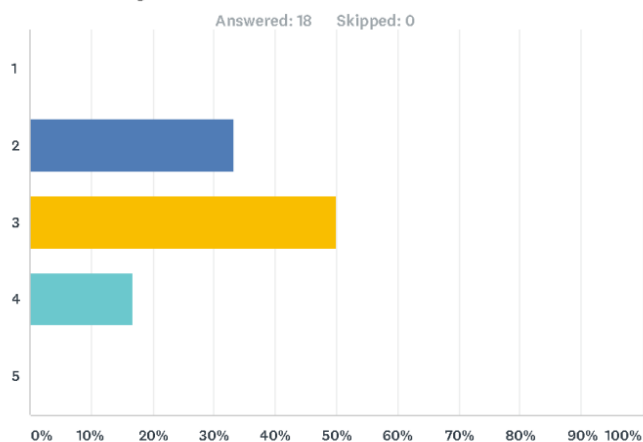
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	33.33%	6
2	44.44%	8
3	16.67%	3
4	5.56%	1
5	0.00%	0
Total		18

Q9 Enunciates Clearly



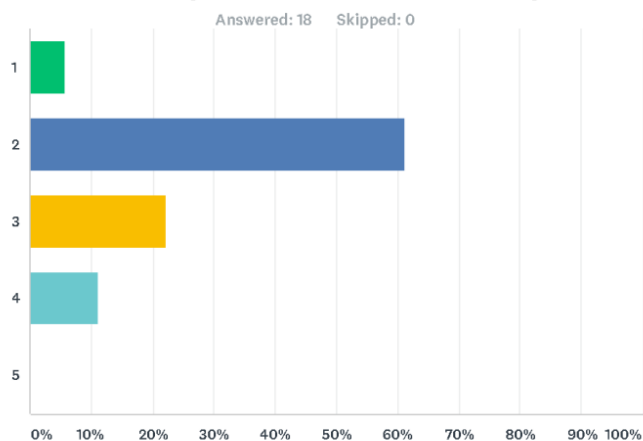
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	0.00%	0
2	16.67%	3
3	38.89%	7
4	44.44%	8
5	0.00%	0
Total		18

Q10 Easy to be heard and understood.



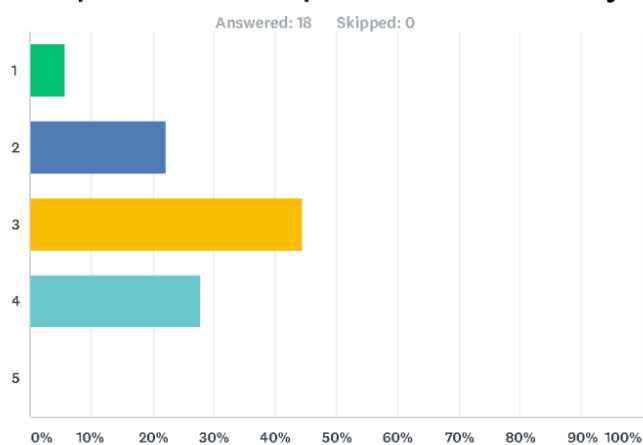
Answer Choices	Responses
1	0.00% 0
2	33.33% 6
3	50.00% 9
4	16.67% 3
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q11 Always prepares adequately.



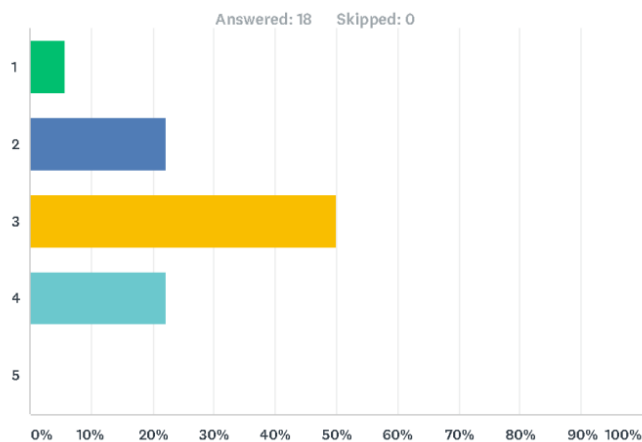
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	61.11% 11
3	22.22% 4
4	11.11% 2
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q12 Emphasizes main points in several ways.



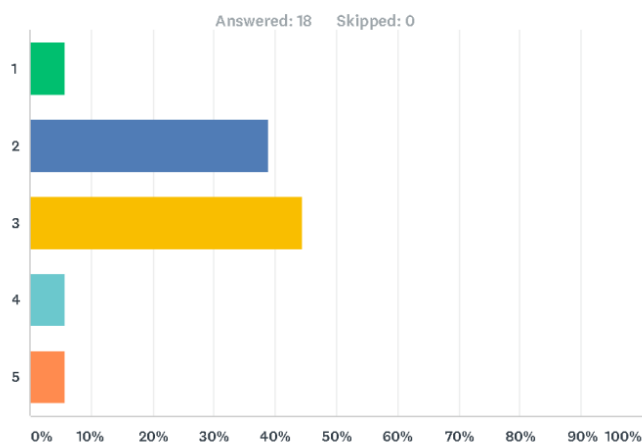
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	22.22% 4
3	44.44% 8
4	27.78% 5
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q13 Maintains an appropriate pace when presenting.



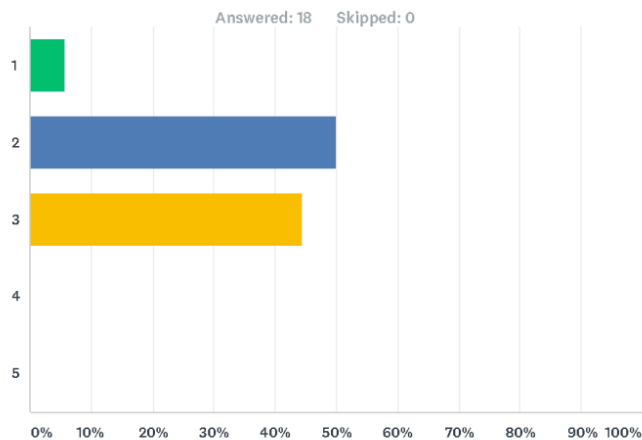
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	22.22% 4
3	50.00% 9
4	22.22% 4
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q14 Use of humor.



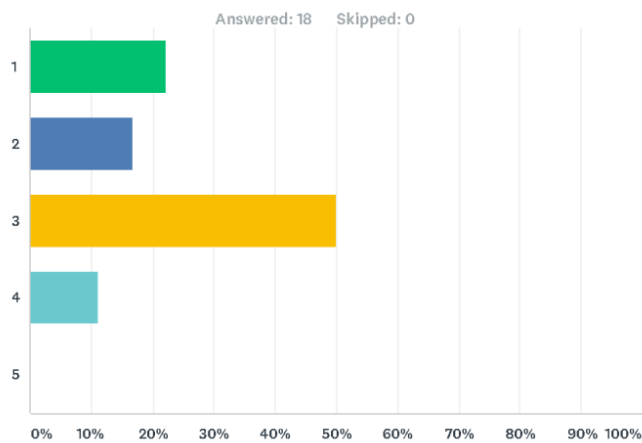
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	38.89% 7
3	44.44% 8
4	5.56% 1
5	5.56% 1
Total	18

Q15 Establishes and maintains a good connection with audience.



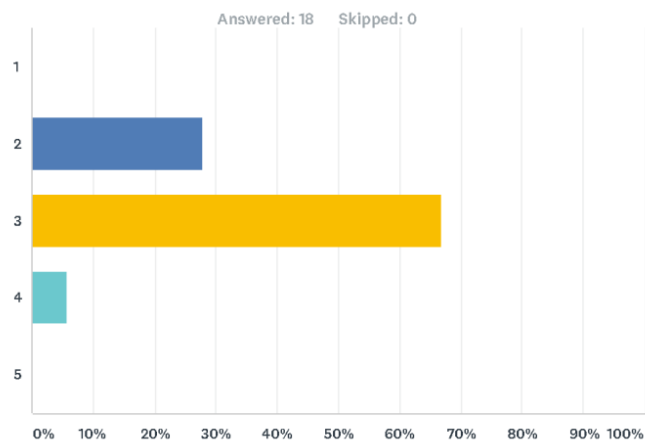
Answer Choices	Responses
1	5.56% 1
2	50.00% 9
3	44.44% 8
4	0.00% 0
5	0.00% 0
Total	18

Q16 Stays within time restraints.



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	22.22%	4
2	16.67%	3
3	50.00%	9
4	11.11%	2
5	0.00%	0
Total		18

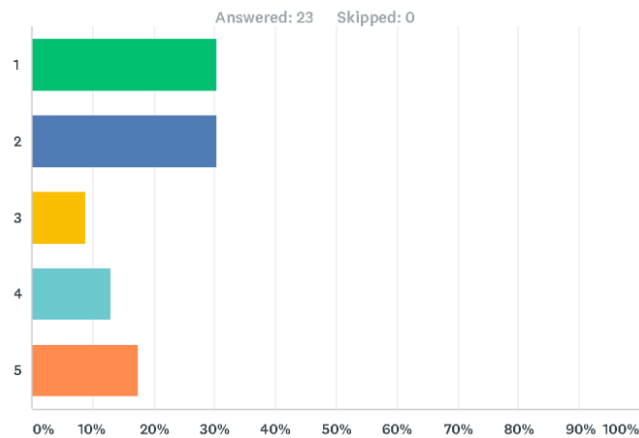
Q17 Overall, your rating as an influential presenter.



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	0.00%	0
2	27.78%	5
3	66.67%	12
4	5.56%	1
5	0.00%	0
Total		18

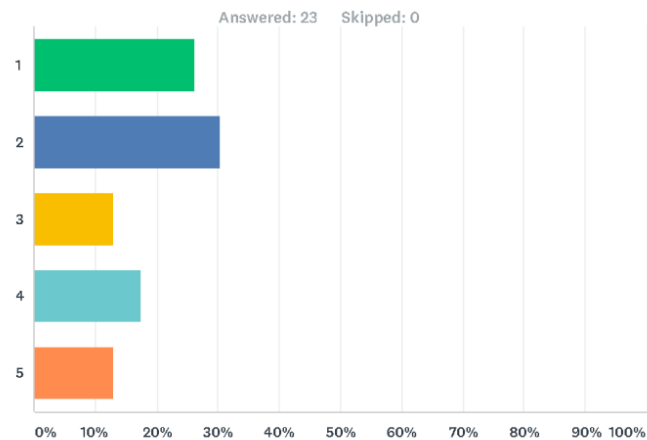
APPENDIX M: POST-SESSION EVALUATION

Q1 Intentional about your message helping someone.



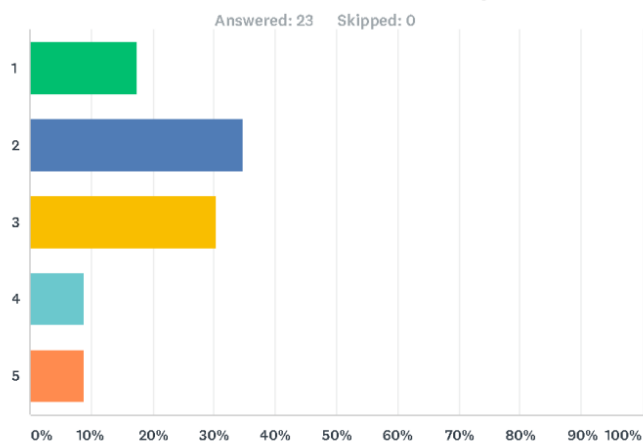
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	30.43%	7
2	30.43%	7
3	8.70%	2
4	13.04%	3
5	17.39%	4
Total		23

Q2 Careful about “how” you say what you say.



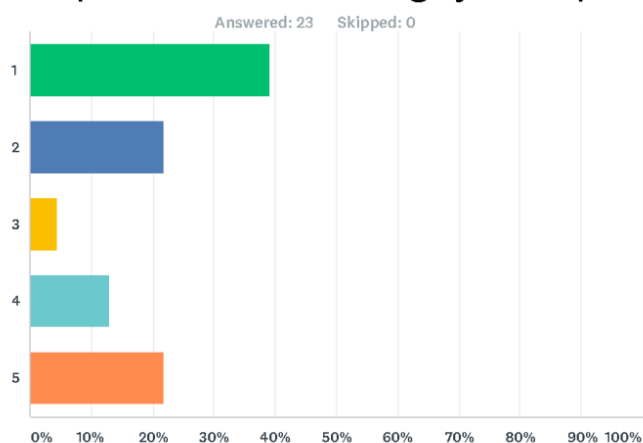
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	26.09%	6
2	30.43%	7
3	13.04%	3
4	17.39%	4
5	13.04%	3
Total		23

Q3 Use of inflection and facial expressions.



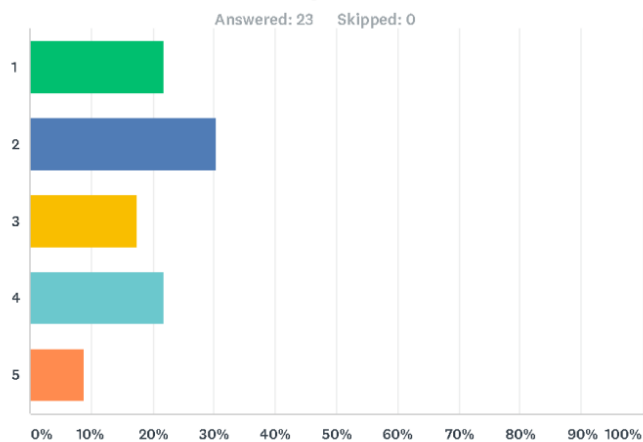
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	17.39%	4
2	34.78%	8
3	30.43%	7
4	8.70%	2
5	8.70%	2
Total		23

Q4 Reflects a passion for the message you are presenting.



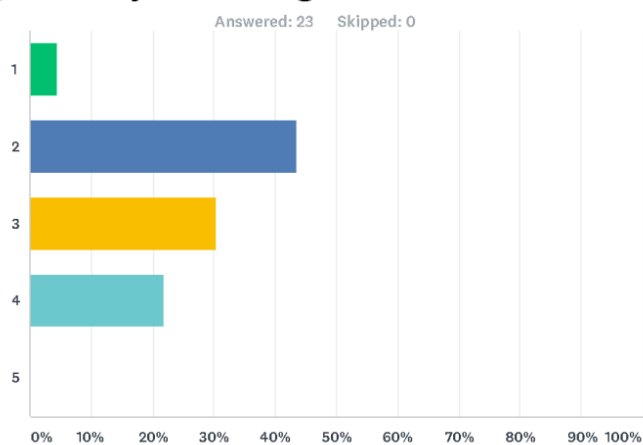
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	39.13%	9
2	21.74%	5
3	4.35%	1
4	13.04%	3
5	21.74%	5
Total		23

Q5 Aware of who your audience is.



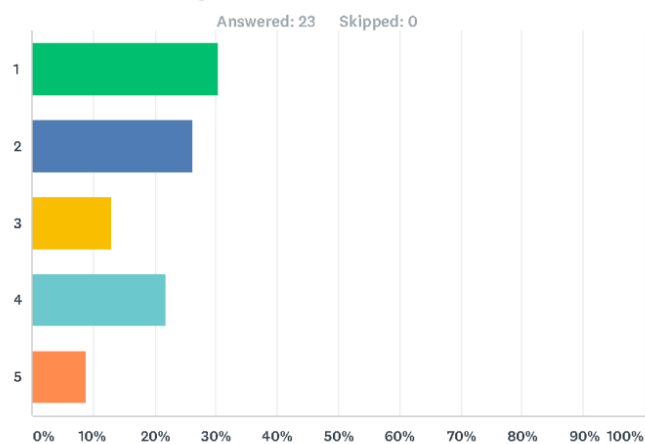
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	21.74%	5
2	30.43%	7
3	17.39%	4
4	21.74%	5
5	8.70%	2
Total		23

Q6 Conveys a message that is memorable.



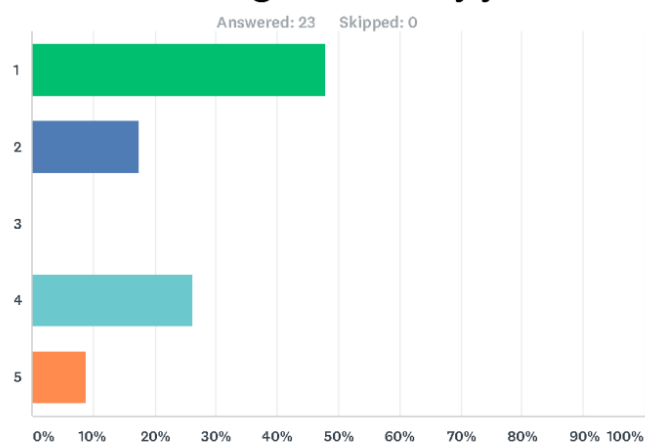
Answer Choices	Responses
1	4.35% 1
2	43.48% 10
3	30.43% 7
4	21.74% 5
5	0.00% 0
Total	23

Q7 Uses stories.



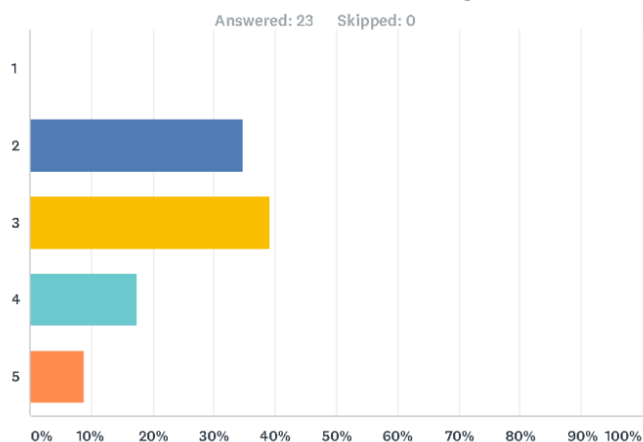
Answer Choices	Responses
1	30.43% 7
2	26.09% 6
3	13.04% 3
4	21.74% 5
5	8.70% 2
Total	23

Q8 Considered as being authentic by your audience.



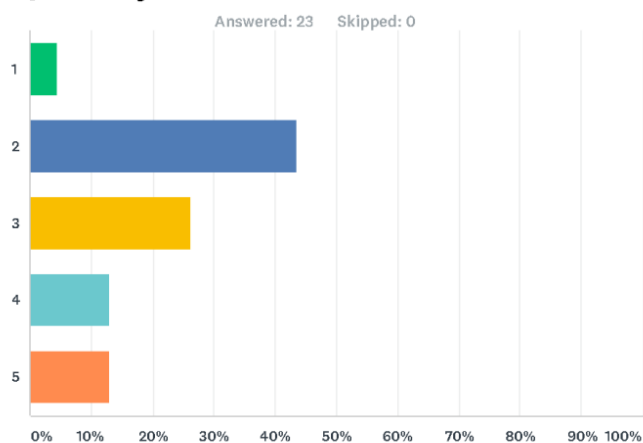
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	47.83%	11
2	17.39%	4
3	0.00%	0
4	26.09%	6
5	8.70%	2
Total		23

Q9 Annunciates clearly.



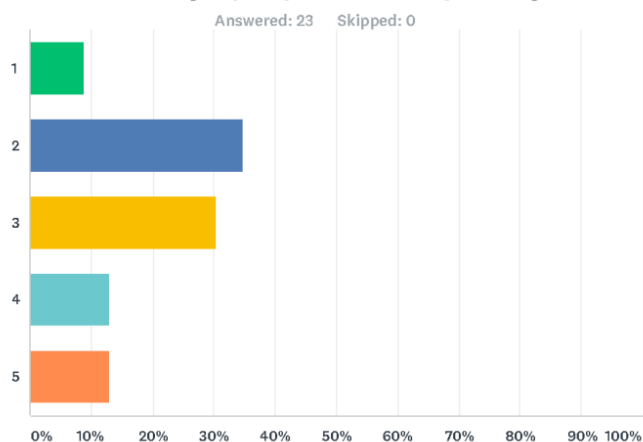
Answer Choices	Responses	
1	0.00%	0
2	34.78%	8
3	39.13%	9
4	17.39%	4
5	8.70%	2
Total		23

Q10 Easy to be heard and understood.



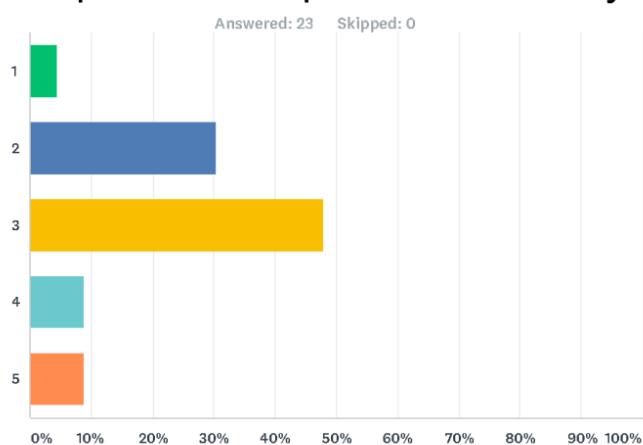
Answer Choices	Responses
1	4.35% 1
2	43.48% 10
3	26.09% 6
4	13.04% 3
5	13.04% 3
Total	23

Q11 Always prepares adequately.



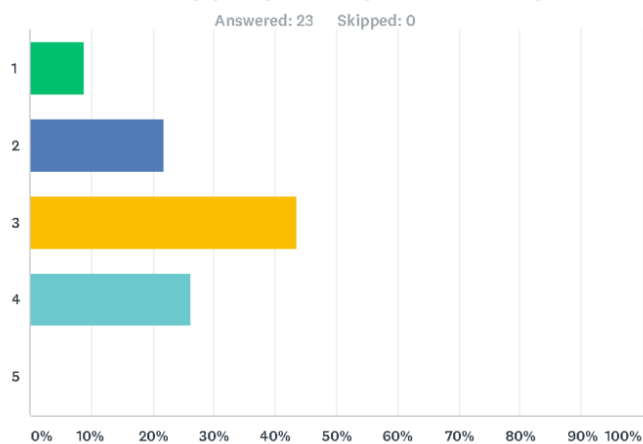
Answer Choices	Responses
1	8.70% 2
2	34.78% 8
3	30.43% 7
4	13.04% 3
5	13.04% 3
Total	23

Q12 Emphasizes main points in several ways.



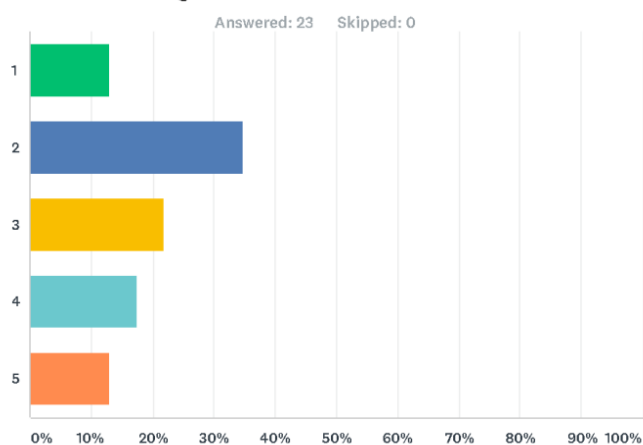
Answer Choices	Responses
1	4.35% 1
2	30.43% 7
3	47.83% 11
4	8.70% 2
5	8.70% 2
Total	23

Q13 Maintains an appropriate pace when presenting.



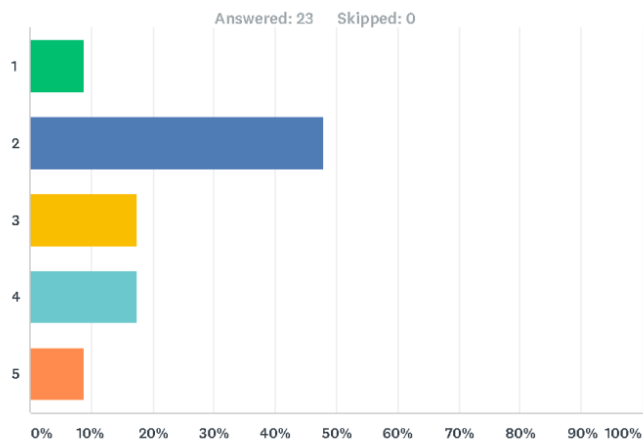
Answer Choices	Responses
1	8.70% 2
2	21.74% 5
3	43.48% 10
4	26.09% 6
5	0.00% 0
Total	23

Q14 Use of humor.



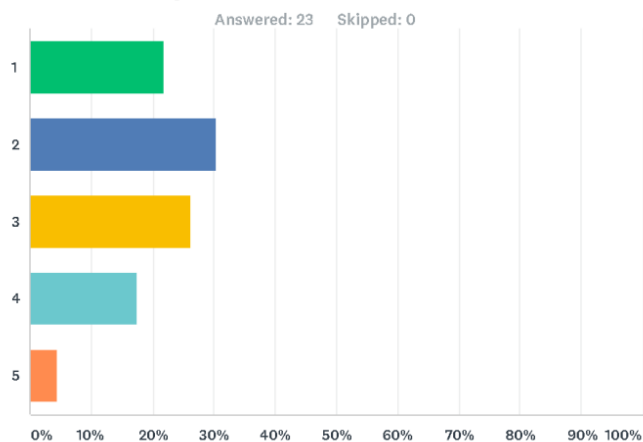
Answer Choices	Responses
1	13.04% 3
2	34.78% 8
3	21.74% 5
4	17.39% 4
5	13.04% 3
Total	23

Q15 Establishes and maintains a good connection with audience.



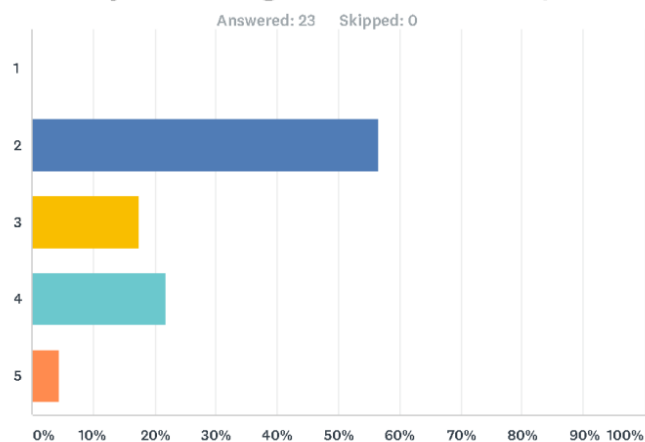
Answer Choices	Responses
1	8.70% 2
2	47.83% 11
3	17.39% 4
4	17.39% 4
5	8.70% 2
Total	23

Q16 Stays within time restraints.



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	21.74%	5
2	30.43%	7
3	26.09%	6
4	17.39%	4
5	4.35%	1
Total		23

Q17 Overall, your rating as an influential presenter.



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	0.00%	0
2	56.52%	13
3	17.39%	4
4	21.74%	5
5	4.35%	1
Total		23

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