

Dynamic Preaching & Teaching Made Simple

By Dr. Dan Cheatham, www.devotional.net

How can a person effectively minister the Gospel? Why are people irresistibly drawn to certain preachers, pastors, and leaders, but neutral or hostile in their feelings and response to others? Why do most preachers seem to bore or gore God's people? I believe I can answer these questions in this booklet. God has given me a recipe for dynamic preaching and teaching. But before we discuss the S.I.T. recipe in detail, let's first talk about some basic truths about communicating God's Word. Some of these things may serve only as a review to you, or if you are relatively new to the ministry, these truths will begin to build a firm foundation inside of you. In either case, there DEFINITELY EXISTS certain principles that must be applied by all Christian leaders in order to succeed as a preacher or teacher of God's Word, regardless of personality, style, or the specific nature of one's calling. My aim here is to share principles, not rules... scriptural guidelines, not rigid formulas.

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PREPARATION (Also see the booklet, "Help! I'm Called To The Ministry!")

God cannot bless laziness or disobedience. God CAN bless preparation. In Proverbs 8:1-6, the Bible teaches that there are Seven Pillars Of Wisdom. The very first pillar is ADVANCE PREPARATION! (See my future booklet and link entitled "The Seven Pillars Of Wisdom.") The Bible calls the Word Of God "The Sword Of The Spirit". In other words, the tool or weapon that the Spirit uses is The Word Of God, or the scripture. Therefore, if the Spirit is going to have anything to work with to meet the needs of the people as you speak, it will have to be the quantity and quality of the Word you have stored up in yourself. Are you spending the quality time necessary? Are you reading your Bible daily and studying the scripture? Are you meditating, pondering, and thinking on verses in between reading times? Are you confessing the Word aloud with your own mouth while in prayer? Are you applying the truths you've learned to your own character and life? Are you memorizing portions of scripture and storing them up in your heart and mind? Are you writing down the major points of what God has given you to say? Are you outlining on paper or computer the development of the message God is forming in your heart? Are you running cross-references in your Bible, looking up the Greek and Hebrew definitions, acquainting yourself with the historical or cultural context of your passages, and digging for resources? Are you taking the time to mentally translate the truths you are learning into the vernacular and setting of your own modern day culture and the present issues and problems people are facing? Are you allowing the Bible portions you have been reading in your own private devotions to soften your heart and sweeten your attitudes? Are you a Bibleholic? Are you a Prayer Addict? Are you mentally or literally rehearsing what you are going to say? Are you allowing yourself to be consumed with the message God is giving you or are you treating it as common and ordinary. Are you excited yourself over the things God is showing you? When God gives you inspired thoughts or insight into a scripture, do you keep a journal or something handy to quickly capture the thought by writing it down so that you can come back to it later? Or do you let inspired thoughts slip from you because you don't treasure his dealings with you enough to write them down? (Like someone has said - The only two things with perfect memory are God and a Piece of Paper! Or a computer, I might add.... as long as you make backups of your data! Ha!) Do you have a FOUNDATION SCRIPTURE for your message that you will begin with when you speak which will launch you into everything else you will say, or are you sloppily going to wander into the topic of your message and waste the time of God's precious people? Are you going to ramble around with your opinions and trying to get your focus when you speak; or are you going to start with God's Word by reading your foundation scripture at the very beginning of your message? Do you have an outline to get you back on track if you get diverted, or are you too proud, thinking it is not spiritual to have an outline or to prepare? NOTES are NOT carnal! Notes are NECESSARY for the proper communication and progressive unveiling of Biblical truth. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit won't take you on "rabbit trails" or "tributaries of truth" during your message in order to meet the needs of the listeners, but you need to have notes in order to get you back into the main river. Notes will keep you from wandering or getting lost, especially if you don't speak often or you've only been preaching less than 10 years. They are also practical proof to God and yourself that you are READY! Do you have any unconfessed sins in your own life? Are you burdened down with worries and cares, having failed to appropriate Bible promises and commit things to God? Are you bitter or unforgiving in your heart towards anyone, having failed to pronounce your forgiveness of them in quality time of prayer to God? More is caught than taught, someone has said. You teach what you know. But more importantly, you reproduce who you really are. Your gifting can carry you further than your character can sustain you, if you are not cautious. Are you preparing yourself? Preparation of your message is important, but preparation of yourself, your life, your character, your relationships, and your heart IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. What is happening in you, to you, and through you during the week is actually more important than what you SAY from the pulpit. The quality of your own spirit is what is really transmitted when you speak. Are YOU prepared? Have you given God the time, the yieldedness, and obedience to brake up the fallow ground of your own heart and make it soft and usable in His hands? Is your heart touchable and transparent? Jesus prayed to the Father, "For their sakes, I have sanctified myself."

PRESENTATION

The Bible talks about putting "apples of gold in containers of silver." God's words are the golden nuggets that will set people free. But we have to make God's Word attractive by putting it in silver containers. Have you noticed how much better a beautiful painting looks in a beautiful frame? Many times the frame costs more than the painting itself. In the restaurant business, PRESENTATION is of utmost importance. What the plate looks like, or what the desert looks like is almost as important as how it tastes. In merchandise sales, how the merchandise is presented in the catalog or on the clothing rack is just as important as the articles themselves. In preaching and teaching, HOW YOU PRESENT GOD'S WORD IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. How are you groomed? Is your hair and face neat? Is your beard or mustache untrimmed? Are you fresh shaven? Fresh showered? Do you smell good? How are you dressed? Do your pants fit? Are they high watered? Are there holes or splits in your shoes? Are they shined? Is your level of dress appropriate to the occasion or geographic location and culture where you are speaking? How is your body language? How is your eye contact? Are your facial expressions conducive to public leadership and appropriate to the truth or mood you are presently portraying in your message? How about your cleanliness? Your finger nails? Your deodorant? Your breath mints? The fit of your clothing? The color coordination of your clothing? The quality of your clothing? Your physical fitness? The inflections and intonations of your voice? Your command of volume? Your command of silence? Your posture? The natural body movements of your personality? Your ability to communicate with your hands? The variety of positions, stances, walking and movement, or are you stuck in a rut of just a few hand movements, locations to stand, or too predictable of motion? Can you appear relaxed in order to assist the people in their own relaxation and reception of God's Word, or do you appear up tight, or formal, or uninterested, or nervous? How is your enthusiasm and excitement? Are you fresh or fatigued? Rested or Weary? And especially HOW DO YOU SPEAK? What is your vocabulary like? Are you stuck with a very limited vocabulary? How is your English? How is your pronunciation? Are you stuck with one speed of talking (usually too fast)? Are your illustrations and stories considerate of people from different walks of life who may be present (i.g. male, female, single, married, divorced, black, white, oriental, etc.)? When you read the scripture, do you read it monotone or in some hyper-religious tone of voice, or do you add reality, life and personality to the reading? How is your grammar and sentence structure? Do you fill every transition of thought or moment of pause and silence with an "Um" or a "Hallelujah" or some other jargon filler that frustrates the listeners? Have you committed massive portions of scripture to memory, able to quote them when prompted by the Spirit during your message or are you Word of God illiterate? Can you laugh at yourself when you make a mistake in your speaking, or are you insecure and expect oratorical perfection, making the people feel uncomfortable by your own insecurity? I could ask another hundred questions here, but do not have enough space or time to do so. Your and my goal should be to become EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS OF GOD'S WORD.

FRESHNESS

NEVER share stale, molded, bread with people. Rather give them fresh bread, hot from the oven, fresh from heaven's bakery. Preach and teach only that which is fresh from your own devotions and recent experiences with God. I cannot overemphasize this point. Only that part of the Word that is "hot" inside of you will be "hot" to the people when you speak to them. Only those truths that have recently become a "living thing" in your own heart have the ability to minister "life" to your listeners. Just because a certain message was "cooking" inside of you a few weeks ago doesn't mean it will "cook" again today. The Holy Spirit may have touched a message mightily a few weeks ago, but if you try to repeat the message again to another crowd, there is no guarantee it will have the same touch, unless the Holy Spirit has "quicken" it again to you right before preaching it again. One cannot successfully preach out of their intellect or their emotions and expect divine results in the listeners. Communication from Heaven to Earth must be heart to heart. God's people deserve a "rhema" or "now" word, every time they come to the feeding station. It goes without saying, that preaching and teaching from some kind of Preaching Quarterly or some similar resource, will NEVER bring a life-changing, life-imparting word to people. You just can't preach any truth from God's Word, you must preach fresh manna, that which the Holy

Spirit is emphasizing and speaking into His Body at this present time. You cannot share just what you think is popular, or trendy, or fashionable or what you have heard others speak. You must hear the message for yourself. Others may have had a part in what you are hearing, but ultimately you must hear for yourself in a personal way from the Lord. This requires spending quality time with God, until He speaks something to your heart or lifts certain truths and understanding from the pages of your Bible.

ETIQUETTE (Also see my booklet "Ministerial Etiquette and Ethics" for more details)

The Bible teaches that we are to "give honor to whom honor is due." It also teaches to "greet one another." Paul taught the secret of "becoming all things to all men in order to reach them where they were at." God is the author of courtesy, protocol, common sense, thoughtfulness, and kindness. Thus every preacher should practice some common courtesies. The preacher should also be aware of his environment, sensitive to cultural differences, and attune to people's level of receptivity of his or her ministry. The effective communicator of God's Word should never purposely create a barrier of communication. Barriers will sometimes happen because of people's hangups or preferences and our own imperfections or incompatibilities, but we should endeavor to minimize the probability of these problems by developing a gracious personality, obtaining some social skills, and gaining some wisdom about people.

If you are invited to speak at someone else's church or event, you should confirm it with them by letter or e-mail, and again a few days before arrival. You should know in advance the travel, accommodation, and financial arrangements and/or expectations BEFORE your arrival. Within a few days or a couple of weeks after your departure, you should send your host a thank you letter or e-mail, expressing your gratitude for the open door, his or her friendship, and the generous love offering or honorarium. If you are a guest speaker, at the very beginning before you preach your message, you should publicly thank the pastor or leader of that event for the opportunity to speak. Honor the leader with whatever words seem appropriate at that moment. Always seek to confirm and reaffirm God's chosen leaders to God's people. Never say anything that would cause the people to disrespect, ignore, or suspect their leadership. It is always appropriate if the meeting might include other ministers, to ask them to stand before the people momentarily, honor them, and acknowledge their presence and importance. Make sure you know the time allotted for you to speak and abide by that guideline from the leadership of that church or event. If you are a guest, thank the congregation for any help, assistance, accommodations, etc. that they have so graciously provided. If you are a pastor, thank your congregation from time to time for their obedience in tithes and offerings and express your gratitude for their care and concern over you and your family.

HUMOR

The Bible says that God laughs.² I believe that heaven is a place of great swelling laughter as well as a place of reverence and awe. He that laughs, lasts! One of the greatest communicators in the Bible said: "A wise teacher makes learning a joy..."³ One of the greatest tools a preacher can use is HUMOR. A natural command of HUMOR will help people receive a message from God's Word. If you can get people to laugh together, they can worship together. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."⁴ The joy of the Lord is the strength of our preaching and teaching. Ability to laugh at ourselves and communicate life applications of Bible principles in a humorous way will make our ministry irresistible. Joy is contagious. People will come back for more. People need emotional release from taking themselves too seriously. The preacher can be God's Bartender, passing out strong drinks of humor and joy. Ask Him for these gifts of joy and laughter, that you might help God's people. Ask Him to give you a natural command of humor whenever you are under the anointing. "You have not, because you ask not", the Bible says. Anointed humor helps people drop their guards, equate God with fun, open their hearts, and receive the Word of the Lord! Sometimes the atmosphere of a church service or event can

be so dry, or uptight, or fatigued, that it will take some major humor or some kind of icebreaker at the inception to even get the people relaxed enough to receive anything from God at all. Humor, in this case, often becomes your weapon of choice!

PREACHING VERSUS TEACHING

Preaching is PROCLAIMING truth. Teaching is EXPLAINING truth. Both preaching and teaching minister to the needs of the human heart, but preaching also ministers to the emotions, while teaching ministers to the intellect. Preaching causes a response, namely a decision(s) from one's heart and mind. Teaching likewise causes a response, namely the renewing of one's mind. In the process of preaching, many verses of scripture may be quoted by the speaker, but probably only one to three verses will actually be turned to and read by the preacher and his listeners. On the contrary, many, many verses will probably be turned to, explained in depth, and tied together, in the process of teaching. Preaching trumpets the truth like blasting a wake up call on a bugle! Teaching, however, methodically breaks down the truth into bite size pieces. Teaching brings understanding. Preaching brings decisive action. Teaching often is more relaxed and even-paced, whereas preaching can be more intense and contain explosive peak times during the message. Teaching is akin to long distance running; preaching akin to the sprint. Teaching is like a gentle rain shower; preaching is more like a thunderstorm. Preaching more flamboyant; teaching more low-key.

Some God-called leaders are only preachers. If they try to teach, they are dry and dead. Others are only teachers. If they try to preach they are obnoxious and out of their element. Then God has gifted some leaders with an ability to weave in and out of both anointings. It is a good thing to discover where your own strengths are, and not try to copy someone else's anointings or personality. In order for the Word to have an impact on people from your lips, you must allow it to become a part of your self, your personality, and your own unique style and calling. Listeners can tell when someone is or isn't anointed for something. Is it wet or dry? Is it hot to your heart or cold? Does the anointing come sneakin' on through to the heart, or is it mere intellectual expounding and natural discourse? Do the words register with your heart or is there something distant, inapplicable, or "not living" about them? Even if the right things are being said, they won't change anyone without the Spirit's touch on the words. The speaker can also "feel" when the words coming from his or her lips are sharp and fresh, or just natural speaking. The seasoned minister can easily tell when he is having to force the words versus when his words are in synch with the impulse of the Spirit. The listeners, as well, can "feel" the weight or emptiness of those same words, whether they are deep or shallow, inner or outer, from the heart or from the head, divinely touched or not. The acid test actually occurs after the message is over. If the listeners were able to check the oil level of their hearts with a dipstick, would they declare "empty", "Uh Oh, a quart low", or "Filled to the full!"

FIVE MAJOR KINDS OR FORMATS FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING

There is TOPICAL preaching or teaching, in which a major Biblical theme or truth is being imparted. There is EXPOSITORY preaching or teaching, in which a chapter of the Bible is being shared, or even a series of messages over a period days, weeks or months where a whole book of the Bible is preached or taught. There is BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH preaching or teaching, in which the life or aspect of a certain Biblical character is developed. There is WORD STUDY teaching, whereby every angle of a certain word found many times in the scriptures is developed. And finally, there is TESTIMONY preaching or teaching, in which the central point is to showcase an awesome deed God has done and to use the scripture to support that testimony and produce faith for their own victory in the hearts of the listeners. And of course, these five formats often overlap and intermingle, especially when the speaker is skilled and experienced in communicating God's Word. One observation here, that I think is worth noting: The wise pastor of a flock will balance his feeding and leading of the people by using all of these formats. The topical format, of course, is the most popular, because it develops a major theme and truth that God is wanting to build into the people. However, there is a danger to preaching and

teaching too much using the topical format. The danger is that certain truths will be expressed with too much emphasis to the exclusion of other important Biblical truths. And over a period of time, the spiritual diet of the people is not healthy. Its sort of like the "food pyramid" on the labels of food items. A believer needs a balanced diet of all Biblical truths in order to grow and stay healthy. Error is usually accidentally introduced into the Body of Christ. It usually subtly and slowly introduces itself by leaders getting too focused on a few preferred topics, to the exclusion of others. But when we mix our preaching and teaching styles to include EXPOSITORY speaking as well as topical speaking, it furnishes a measure of BALANCE and SAFETY. Why? Because when we teach or preach whole chapters or books of the Bible from time to time, it permits the Bible to speak for itself. And it allows the Bible to speak for itself on a variety of truths and address a myriad of human needs. The reason we need expository teaching and preaching is the same reason we need to read our Bibles daily: "We think we know what we need and we all have our favorite verses and Bible topics, but the truth of the matter is, that only God knows what we really need. He has thus given us whole books of the Bible so as to touch the whole gamut of human need as we continue to read and receive His whole counsel." Also EXPOSITORY preaching and teaching often goes a long way in answering people's eternal questions. Biographical Sketch speaking should be used occasionally because of the relevant, timeless, and character-building lessons that we can learn from stories and personalities recorded in the Bible. Word Studies are enriching and bring deep understanding as well as life application. And Testimony preaching, of course, invigorates and rekindles the faith and fire in people's hearts!

THE ANOINTING COMETH

If you are genuinely called to the ministry and you are scheduled to speak, you can have confidence and KNOW that THE ANOINTING COMETH! The anointing to communicate God's Word will come. You will experience a divine infusion of resurrection life to speak for Him. Sometime that day, or an hour or so before, a few minutes before, as you rise to take your position to speak, a few minutes into your message... there will come the anointing.. perhaps in one of many forms... a moment of mental clarity - a sense of energy - a swelling peace and deep inner settling - an awareness of His authority becoming your own - an overwhelming sense of power, energy, or confidence - a holy compassion for people - a quickening of your mental clarity and emotional freedom - sometimes a quick-charge of so much energy you feel that you could run through a troop or leap over a wall - sometimes a sense of holy boldness and fearlessness - sometimes it is an actual sensation someplace in or on your body, where you feel a warmth, or a tingling, or a strangely beautiful sensation, or a glow. (Many times when the anointing comes on me, He literally touches my brow, my temple, or the side of my face, and I actually feel an infusion of energy flowing into me from that place. Other times for me, it is just a surge of internal energy and confidence. Sometimes for me, it is not present at all when I begin speaking and I slowly sense the level rise as I continue speaking.) But in any case or through any form... IT COMES! Thank God, it comes... He comes!

Sometimes this anointing or quickening comes as you are praying before the service... or meditating on your message before the service... or thinking on a scripture that has very little, if anything, to do with your message... sometimes as someone prays for you or lays hands on you before the service... sometimes while you're catnapping before a service to renew your energy... sometimes as you first open your mouth to speak (Ps 81:10 I [am] the LORD thy God...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.), sometimes as you look out upon the people and realize how much God loves them.

What is the anointing? The anointing is that divine something that exhilarates the preacher and captivates the heart of the listeners. The anointing is that divine something that comes on you, supersaturates you, superseparates you, so much that when you speak it is as if God is speaking, so much that when you act, it is as if God is acting! The anointing soaks you, saturates you, empowers you to accomplish something that only God can accomplish. It is Him infusing a measure of Himself into you and through you to accomplish His gracious will!

THE TOUCH COMETH

What is THE TOUCH? The Touch is the place in your message where you seem to transition from mere preaching and teaching into a realm that I will term, for lack of better words, the spirit of prophecy. I call it THE TOUCH because it is likened to the touch of the Master's hand; a feeling is as if God has placed His finger on you and you are being supernaturally charged with Heavenly current. This is the time during your message where heaven has opened up in your heart and you speak effortlessly with an authority that is not your own; the place where the words simply roll out of you and God burns His Word into the hearts of the listeners! This is the period during your message where the truths you are sharing seem to peak out as the Spirit culminates everything you have said. This is when the Spirit takes you and the listeners past the slow incline on the exponential curve and rockets you into a quick steep climb into climactic revelation. Suddenly, everything you have been saying culminates into a quick release, a massive dose, a crystal clear, inner illumination of the truth(s) you are sharing. HAVE CONFIDENCE in "The Touch." Know that THE TOUCH COMETH! Expect it. Look for it. Feel it. Flow with it. Don't hold it back. Often it comes towards the end or in the middle of your message. Sometimes it comes more than once, especially with seasoned ministers of the Gospel. Occasionally it comes early. If it does come early, it can make anything else you say anticlimactic and difficult to speak. If it comes early, it sometimes requires you to wind up your message quickly as you really can't improve upon, expound upon, or develop any further what the Spirit has already spoken and imparted to people's hearts. With some experience, the anointed minister learns whether to wrap it up early or senses when there is enough anointing to continue, waiting for another peak. Keep in mind here, that as I explain this phenomenon I have coined "THE TOUCH", that I am not talking about natural speaking techniques like summarizing, or reviewing, or stressing the major points of your outline. Rather I am discussing here a supernatural occurrence that is so precious, so awesome, and so necessary, that no human being can take the glory for it and no human being can make it happen no matter the amount of preparation, oratory skill, or cleverness of speech.

A RECIPE FOR DYNAMIC PREACHING AND TEACHING!

A long time ago God gave me a RECIPE for dynamic preaching and teaching. It is the S.I.T. RECIPE. Can you remember it? S.I.T. spells "sit." People will "sit" and learn from you as you share His Word if you learn the S.I.T. RECIPE. "S" is for SCRIPTURE. "I" is for ILLUSTRATION. "T" is for TESTIMONY.

S.CRIPTURE

For every truth from God's Word we want to communicate, we must give at least one scripture to the people. Our opinions really don't amount to a proverbial hill of beans. The only thing that will change people is the Word of God. The scripture is the comprehensive equipment of the believer. The Bible commands us to "PREACH THE WORD" when it's convenient or inconvenient, welcome or unwelcome, and under favorable or unfavorable conditions.⁵ We must give people God's Word or we have given them nothing. Zero scripture equals zero results. We should not wait 10 to 30 minutes into our message before quoting scriptures or before turning to a specific place in the Bible and reading from it. God forbid! No! START with a scripture, or a portion of passages, or a chapter, or a complete story from the Bible. Start with a foundation scripture, a truth that launches you and the people into the discovery of what God has placed on your heart. Everything must start with the Word, point to the Word, amplify the Word, proclaim the Word, explain the Word, and be capped off with the Word. Having said all that, how do we make the Word living, applicable, real, and drill it into people's hearts without becoming boring?

Look at the following scripture from Nehemiah 8:5-8, NIV: "Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and

worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. The Levites--Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah--instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." Notice how the ministers here took the time to stay on Bible verses long enough to impart the real meaning and bring clarity to the truth. They knew how to "hang there awhile" by the Spirit, rather than rushing the moment and missing a truth. The teacher usually does this by expounding on the verse, giving Greek or Hebrew definitions, and referencing other verses which bring out the meaning and application of the primary verse. The preacher usually accomplishes this by painting a word picture through a story and/or by repeating this same theme or verse over and over again throughout his discourse as the Spirit drives the truth home. In either case, however, the REVELATION of the truth DAWNS on the hearts of the listeners. If the preacher or teacher has been effective, the truth has become the PERSONAL PROPERTY of the listener's heart. If no light, no revelation, no quickening has occurred; nothing has been accomplished. Even if the Biblical truths were expounded according to all the communication principles taught by the Toastmasters Club, nothing of eternal value has happened to anyone unless the Word spoken has become personal revelation and impartation to the hearer.

In today's high-tech fast-paced society, people's attitude toward communication is about like the following: "TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO SAY, TELL IT TO ME QUICKLY; AND TELL IT TO ME ONLY ONCE." Unfortunately, people are people. The fact of the matter is that people only learn and retain by repetition. So the question of the day is, "How do you REPEAT YOURSELF without being boring and REPETITIOUS?" The answer is to repeat yourself, but with totally different words and from a different angle, so that the listener doesn't think, "He's repeating himself again and boring me to tears." Rather as you repeat yourself by the means of illustrations and testimonies, the listener is drawn INTO the truth and begins to participate in the learning process. The listener actually enjoys the repetition because, internally, he or she never identifies it as repetition. To them it is merely a further unveiling, a deeper discovering, and the whole process is fresh, new, and irresistibly fun!

ILLUSTRATION

Jesus knew how to repeat himself. Jesus would quote or paraphrase Old Testament scriptures, then he'd talk in picture language. He used parables from common everyday experiences. Often He used God's marvelous creation to ILLUSTRATE the truths of the scriptures (i.g. rivers, mountains, wells, flowers, grass, seeds, rocks, bread, trees, water, wine, skies, clouds, animals, birds, etc.) Jesus was and is the greatest preacher ever. Should we not follow His example? The Holy Spirit desires every major point in your message to be reinforced with a practical illustration that the people can identify with. Illustrations bring understanding and inward revelation of truth. God's Word is not complicated. It can be broken down into language and pictures that everyone can understand and apply. In Jesus' day, He broke it down into fishermen's terms, farmer's terms, and other culturally relevant stories and illustrations. All truth, natural and spiritual, is parallel. A person may be struggling to grasp a truth you have taught them, but when you follow it up with an illustration, the light inside them suddenly turns on, and they proclaim, "Oh I see, I get it...yes, yes, yes!"

T.ESTIMONY

Then for every scriptural truth you are sharing, you can repeat yourself even again as you reinforce your message with your own personal testimony, or the testimony of someone you know or read about. People want TRUTH THAT WALKS OUT IN THEIR SHOES. They want REVELANT messages that help them enjoy God's presence. They want practical Biblical truths that are applicable to their real lives, WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD. The greatest thing you can do for people is to be transparent about yourself and share a personal testimony of how what you're preaching worked in your own life. This, of course, requires you to always have up-to-date experiences with God. But a close walk with God is worth it. There is something

about a personal testimony that makes you "touchable" and "irresistible" to the people. As you share your own life application of the truth or major point you are bringing forth, it makes the Word real and personal to your listeners. Nothing is more invigorating than a victorious personal testimony. As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches that we actually overcome Satan by the word of our testimony.⁶ If you think about it a while, your favorite preachers are really just the ones who are good storytellers. Is that bad? No. Because they are the ones who help you REMEMBER and APPLY those same truths into your own life. You become endeared to them and the truths they have so masterfully imparted to you. Their own testimonies have actually made them "mentorable" to you and have caused you to receive the anointed Word joyfully from their lips.

CONCLUSION

Usually when God gives me a message to preach or teach, I seek him for an illustration and a personal testimony to compliment the major points and scriptures I am going to share. This makes my messages attractive, interesting, exciting, endearing, and pertinent to the people's needs. Then, of course, I am always open to the Spirit as he spontaneously brings illustrations or testimonies to my consciousness while in the middle of my speaking. And He certainly sometimes leads me NOT to share something I originally planned. However, preparing my messages using the S.I.T. method has always left me with the sense that I have brought pleasure to the Holy Spirit by giving Him something to start with, even if He ultimately takes me on another track than I originally planned.

Home in on the S.cripture. Amplify it with an I.llustration. Put the final touch on it with a T.estimony! Mark the spot with a scripture. Drill it with an illustration. Tap it off with a testimony. Ignite the fire with a scripture. Stoke it hotter with an illustration. Make it blazing with a testimony! "Hang with" the Spirit on a SCRIPTURE. Let Him breathe again on that scripture with an ILLUSTRATION. And let that verse become a living thing in the people's heart by a personal TESTIMONY!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Proverbs 25:11 (NIV)

Psalms 2:4 (KJV)

Proverbs 15:2 (LB)

Nehemiah 8:10 (KJV)

II Timothy 4:1,2 (AMP)

Revelation 12:11 (KJV)