

Session 3: Developing a Systematic Approach to Preparation

Part 1: The importance of prayer in our preparation:

- Prayer acknowledges our dependence upon the Lord.
- Prayer acknowledges that this is not just an academic exercise.
- Prayer acknowledges the need to personally internalize the truths.

Part 2: The importance of reading in our preparation:

- **Consideration 1:** Read to get the big picture.
- **Consideration 2:** Read with an eye for important details.
- **Consideration 3:** Read with an awareness of the rest of scripture.

Part 3: The Importance of writing down your thoughts:

- Not every concept will have validity.
- Every verified concept will have value in shaping your understanding of the text.
- Some concepts will lead to other concepts that may not be within the scope of your sermon or lesson.
- Not every verified concept will form an essential part of your final sermon or lesson.

Part 4: The importance of understanding the actual intent of the text:

- Write down the important **words** in the text:
- Write down the important **phrases** in the text:
- Write down the important **concepts** in the text:

Part 5: The importance of rigorous research:

- **We need to verify our ideas before we go too far into our preparation.**
- **Verify the meaning of words:**
 - **Start with dictionaries:** Strongs, Vines, Thayer, Bauer/Danker, Blue Letter Bible, Lexham Bible Dictionary...
 - **Do quick word studies:** OT, NT, and classic literature
- **Verify your understanding of how certain phrases are used in the original languages:**
 - **NET Bible:** language notes
- **Verify that the concepts you see in the text are valid, applicable concepts.**

Part 6: The Importance of reading what others have said about these texts:

- **Good commentaries:**
 - **Classic commentaries:**
 - **Study Bibles:**
 - **Basic Commentaries:**
 - **Modern Commentaries Series:**
 - **Modern Scholarly Commentaries:**
- **Good Sermons and podcasts:**
- **The purpose:**
 - Verification of your research.
 - Verification of their research.
 - Ideas you may have missed.
 - Winnowing of the resources you feel are helpful.

Part 7: The importance of processing raw data into simple teachable concepts:

- **No one wants to listen to a data dump.**
- **No one needs to know how much research you have done behind the scenes.**
- **Everyone should have confidence that what you are saying has gone through a winnowing process of checks and balances.**
- **You need to have the confidence that what you are saying is true, pertinent, and accessible.**
- **You should write down what you have learned and what you are burdened to communicate so you can go back over it at another time to further refine what you have written down.**

Part 8: The importance of writing a summary statement that captures the big picture and the most important concepts that undergird that concept:

- **The big picture:** This should shape the entirety of the sermon or lesson.
- **The proposition:** This should naturally flow from the summary statement.
- **The subpoints:** These should naturally work together to support the summary statement.
- **Order:** The subpoints should be arranged in a logical progression.

Part 9: The sermon or lesson should be filled with or end with practical applications that flow directly from the summary, proposition, and subpoints.

- **Questions:** Questions are used to make people think personally about what has been stated.
- **Statements:** Statements are meant to shape or confront our thinking to make it more conformed to a Biblical viewpoint.
- **Exhortation:** Exhortations are meant to compel us to immediate sustainable action.

Part 10: Final Thoughts:

- Preaching and teaching is not hard work, the preparation is the hard work.
- We need to start with prayer and an open Bible.
- We need to jot down our thoughts and then work to verify our thoughts.
- It is foolish to ignore other people's thoughts, and it is foolish to become mindlessly dependent upon other people's thoughts.
- We should not study to impress, rather to verify that what we are saying is true and consistent.
- We need to be practical and concise with what we present to others.