



PREACHING TRACK

DISCUSSION GUIDE

MODULE 2: PREPARING FOR A COMPELLING SERMON

MODULE INTRODUCTION

Why do we preach? The purpose of these modules is not to just give you information about how to write and deliver sermons. We want to inspire you to preach compelling sermons! That doesn't happen by accident, though. It takes lots of preparation and practice. And it all begins by deciding on the right "shape" of your sermon, the one that will set you up for success and ready your audience to respond. In this module, you will learn the importance of four particular sermon shapes, why they are so effective, and how to use them to your advantage.

VIDEO 2.1

DECIDING ON YOUR SERMON'S SHAPE

Before you put pen to paper for your sermon, it will be helpful to choose the most effective structure. Just like picking out a blueprint for your future house! You'll be more focused in your sermon prep and more effective in your sermon delivery. Knowing the ins and outs of each of these four sermon shapes will give you a handle on each sermon blueprint.

Four Sermon Shapes

1. Truth and Why
2. _____ and _____
3. Problem and Solution
4. _____ and _____

Discussion Questions

- A. In the past, have you just jumped into writing your sermon, or do you like to come up with a plan first? How might knowing your sermon's shape first help you better prepare?
- B. Which of the four sermon shapes do you gravitate toward the most? Why do you think that is?
- C. For each of the four sermon shapes, give a brief example of a sermon you have preached or one you might preach.
- D. How might your preaching be more balanced if you use more than one sermon shape from message to message? Give some specific examples.

VIDEO 2.2

A SERMON THAT CONVEYS A TRUTH

Truth is at the heart of preaching. When we read the Word of God, we are encountering truth. As a preacher, it is your task to present that truth to your audience in a way they can understand and apply. That's why this may be the most important of the four sermon shapes!

Three Functions of the Truth

1. Truth points us to _____.
2. Truth sets us free.
3. Truth makes us _____.

Discussion Questions

- A. It seems obvious that sermons should point people to God. Think of some ways you can make sure that happens, beginning with your sermon prep process.
- B. In your personal life, what are three or four truths that have set you free?
- C. Give two examples of ways a sermon you've preached has helped someone grow closer to God in their personal life.

VIDEO 2.3

A SERMON THAT ANSWERS A QUESTION

People are coming to you for answers. And you have them! As long as you are clear about what the Bible says, you can help anyone with any question. This sermon shape can become your most go-to tool because of its simplistic approach and its orderly outline.

Life-Giving Answers Should:

1. Be to the point.
2. Be well _____.
3. Be credible and reliable.
4. Lead to _____.

Discussion Questions

- A. In your own words, what is the difference between a “life-giving” answer and a typical answer?
- B. How many questions do you receive from your people on a regular basis? On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not at all and 5 being a lot, how well prepared do you generally feel in answering those questions?
- C. Besides the Bible, what are three or four other credible and reliable sources you go to for answers to your audience’s questions?
- D. Give two examples of a sermon you could preach with this specific shape.

VIDEO 2.4

A SERMON THAT SOLVES A PROBLEM

There's no doubt the world has problems today. But we have the solution in Jesus Christ! The Gospel not only saves our soul, it solves our deepest problems. They range from the mundane, such as what type of car to buy, to the meaningful, like what to do with our lives.

Three Things to Consider

1. Solve a problem that people have.
2. Solve a problem that _____.
3. Solve a problem that leads to Christ.

An I.D.E.A. for Solving Problems

1. I - Identify the Problem
2. D - _____ Solutions
3. E - Establish the Best One
4. A - _____ It to Their Life

Discussion Questions

- A. Make a list of problems your audience has encountered in the last calendar year. Make the list as long as you can make it, at least twelve items.
- B. Of the four steps to solving a problem (I.D.E.A.), which do you have the best handle on? With which do you need the most help?
- C. Give three examples of a sermon you've preached that specifically addressed the idea of solving a problem.
- D. Go back to the list of problems your audience has faced. Now, choose three and come up with simple ideas of how the solutions can lead to Christ.

VIDEO 2.5

A SERMON THAT SETS A GOAL

We all want to accomplish great things, but many times we just don't know how to get started. Coming up with a plan to reach a goal can help us in a lot of different ways. Just think how your sermons can inspire people to do great things by setting and achieving the right goals.

4 Questions to Ask as You Set Goals

1. What do I want my life to be?
2. How would my life look _____?
3. What are the large steps I need to take?
4. What are the _____ I can take right now?

Discussion Questions

- A. Name three goals you've set for yourself in the last five years. How successful were you in reaching them?
- B. What are the top three goals you hear from your audience? How have you helped them reach those goals?
- C. To help you with these four questions, think in terms of your church. How might your church look differently if you were able to reach the goals God has set for you?
- D. Taking steps to reach goals takes practice and determination. How does thinking in terms of large steps and then small steps help people reach goals more successfully?

Answers

Video 2.1: Deciding on Your Sermon's Shape

Four Sermon Shapes

1. Truth and Why
2. **Question** and **Answer**
3. Problem and Solution
4. **Goal** and **Steps**

Video 2.2: A Sermon that Conveys a Truth

Three Functions of the Truth

1. Truth points us to **God**.
2. Truth sets us free.
3. Truth makes us **holy**.

Video 2.3: A Sermon that Answers a Question

Life-Giving Answers Should:

1. Be to the point.
2. Be well **thought out**.
3. Be credible and reliable.
4. Lead to **other questions**.

Video 2.4: A Sermon that Solves a Problem

Three Things to Consider

1. Solve a problem that people have.
2. Solve a problem that **can be solved**.
3. Solve a problem that leads to Christ.

An I.D.E.A. for Solving Problems

1. I - Identify the Problem
2. D - **Develop** Solutions
3. E - Establish the Best One
4. A - **Apply** It to Their Life

Video 2.5: A Sermon that Sets a Goal

4 Questions to Ask as You Set Goals

1. What do I want my life to be?
2. How would my life look **different**?
3. What are the large steps I need to take?
4. What are the **small steps** I can take right now?