

SECTION TWO

SECTION TWO
THE DISCIPLE – LEADER AND THE WORD

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The Wheel Illustration

This simple but effective illustration has been used by Navigators for more than fifty years. It helps Christians understand what they are called to do as disciples of Christ. Each part of this illustration represents a crucially important component of a vital Christian life.

Use this illustration to gain understanding about important spiritual disciplines in your own life. What areas encourage you? What areas challenge you?

Why not sketch out "The Wheel Illustration" on a napkin or scrap of paper with someone you are discipling. Help challenge them to think clearly about how to be an obedient follower of Christ.



The Volitional Dimension: How You Relate to Yourself; Your Will

The Hub: Christ the Center

See: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20

Making Christ central in your life is an act of your will. Surrendering totally to Christ's authority and lordship may be at conversion or after some months or even years. God creates within you the desire to do what He wants you to do in order to express His lordship in your life.



The Rim: Obedience to Christ

See: Romans 12:1; John 14:21

Some acts of obedience to God are internal. But even these internal acts of obedience, such as attitudes, habits, motives, sense of values, and day-to-day thoughts, eventually surface in relationships with other people. The proof of your love for God is your demonstrated obedience to Him.

The Vertical Dimension: How You Relate to God

The Word Spoke

See: 2 Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8

As God speaks to you through the Scriptures, you can see His principles for life and ministry, learn how to obey, and become acquainted with the Christ who is worthy of your unqualified allegiance. A vital personal intake of God's Word is essential for health and growth.





The Prayer Spoke

See: John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7

Prayer is a natural response to God as you hear Him speak to you through His Word. It is sharing your heart with the One who longs for your companionship and who cares about your concerns. Prayer unleashes the power of God in your personal battles and in the lives of those for whom you pray.

The Horizontal Dimension: How You Relate to Others

The Fellowship Spoke

See: Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24-25

Learning from and encouraging others creates a chemistry pleasing to God. God has directed Christians to build each other up through inter-dependence and loving relationships with each other.



The Witnessing Spoke

See: Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16

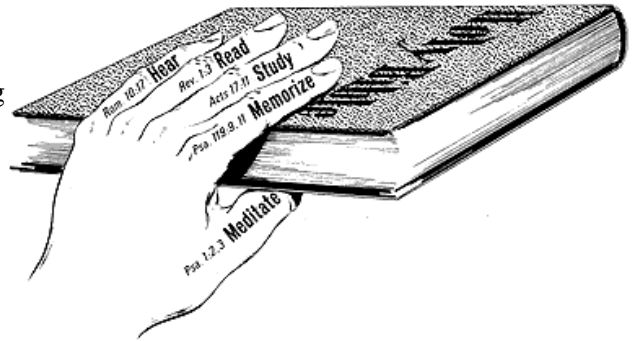
The natural overflow of a rich vibrant life in Christ should be sharing with others how they too can have this life. God has given believers the privilege and responsibility of reaching the world with the Good News about Christ.

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The Hand Illustration

The "Word Hand" shows the five methods of learning from the Bible.

Each of these methods is important. This is how we Get a "grip" on God's Word.



Hearing

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Hearing the Word from godly pastors and teachers provides insight into others' study of the Scriptures as well as stimulating your own appetite for the Word.

Reading

Revelation 1:3 *Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Reading the Bible gives an overall picture of God's Word. Many people find it helpful to use a daily reading program which takes them systematically through the Bible.

Studying

Acts 17:11 *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

Studying the Scriptures leads to personal discoveries of God's truths. Writing down these discoveries helps you organize and remember them.

Memorizing

Psalms 119:9, 11 *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Memorizing God's Word enables use of the Sword of the Spirit to overcome Satan and temptations...to have it readily available for witnessing or helping others with a "word in season."

Meditating

Psalms 1:2, 3 *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.*

Meditation is the thumb of the Word Hand, for it is used in conjunction with each of the other methods. Only as you meditate on God's Word--thinking of its meaning and application in your life--will you discover its transforming power at work within you.

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Principles of Scripture Memory

“Thy Word I have hidden in my heart...” Psalms 119: 11

Is there anything harder to do than memorize? So many young disciples struggle with trying to memorize Scripture. For some it seems easy, and for others it's nearly impossible. We can all agree it's important and necessary to live a strong, victorious Christian life; but still have difficulty doing it.

Getting a Grip

Remember the “hand illustration?” We can hear the Word, read the Word, study the Word, and even meditate on the Word, but until we go that last step and commit a biblical truth to memory, we don't really have a strong grip on that truth. Memorizing a verse of Scripture is like the “thumb” of your hand; that's where the grip is, in the thumb. So it is with memorizing a verse in the Bible. You don't really have the verse in your heart until you can quote it back when you need to.

The Israelites did it

Those great men and women of God that we read about in the Bible, all had committed their Holy Scriptures to memory. This is especially true in Israel after the occupation of the Promised Land. As they settled in and the synagogue replaced the temple, it became the center of learning. There were no printed bibles, only the Torah that was kept by the rabbi in the synagogue. Children were taught to memorize the Law of Moses.

Moses says to the people: *“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols upon your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”* **Deut. 6: 4-9**

This is how the children of Israel kept their sacred scriptures alive. The parents memorized the Law of God and taught their children to memorize it all the days of their life.

Jesus memorized the Word

In Luke 4 we read of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Each time Satan comes to our Lord, we see Jesus quote the Old Testament Scriptures to the Enemy. Where did Jesus learn those verses? He learned them as a boy in synagogue. He obeyed the teaching of **Psalms 119: 9,11** *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word...I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* Throughout His ministry we see over and over again how often Jesus knew the scriptures by heart. He had spent the time to memorize God's Holy Word.

Christ's Disciples memorized the Word

One need only look at the ministry of the Apostles to see how they were men, “mighty in scripture.” Peter can stand up at Pentecost in the Temple yard and quote whole sections of the Psalms and the Prophets. Where did he learn that? He didn't have a scroll in front of him; all he had was his memory and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. But it was all he needed!

A Lost Art

In generations past, Christian parents taught their children to memorize God's Word. However, it has become a lost tradition in the last century of the church. Yet it needs to be restored in the daily life of

every disciple. The true disciple of Jesus needs to put on the whole armor of God that he may stand against the enemy. Memorizing the Word is a vital part of that armor. It takes time, work and commitment, but the rewards are great.

Some Practical Helps

The Navigators organization in Colorado Springs Colorado, have done more to bring scripture memory back into the life of the church than any other force in the world today. They can be contacted over the Internet @ www.navigators.com, they offer multiple aids to memorizing the Word. Using their model, let's make some suggestions on how to get started and then keep going with a systematic memory program.

Select a system and stick to it

It is best to memorize topically. Put simply, it means you file verses in your mind, by naming the file. That's how your computer/brain likes to do it. For example: Years ago Dawson Trotman trained his men by devising the "wheel" as a basic set of topics to get his men started memorizing. (See **The Wheel** in section two of this manual)

Christ the Center = the hub of the wheel. This topic which shows that Christ must be at the center of a disciple's life has two verses that say what the topic describes. Learning the twelve verses that go with the six topics in the wheel is a great way to start.

Create a Topic

You can create any system if you file the verses under a chosen topic. You may want to memorize verses on "Parenting" then find verses to say what the topic describes. Choosing a topic is the first step to success.

References "before and after"

It is a proven memory aid that repetition aids the memory. The more times you say it, the easier it is for the brain to file it away. If your topic is "parenting" and your verse is Ephesians 6:4, then you want to get into the habit of saying topic and reference "before and after" you quote the verse to yourself or your accountability partner. This habit of saying both the topic and the reference before you quote the verse, and also after you quote it, will really make it "stick" in your memory. The verse gets "filed in your data bank" under the topic "parenting" and the reference gets associated with the verse in your memory.

Review! Review! Review!

Repetition is the mother of learning. It certainly is the key to a good memory! You may be able to quote a verse you quickly memorized ten minutes ago, but if you don't repeatedly recite it over each day or at least several times a week, you will lose it from your memory. The only way to retain what we memorize is to review the verses, citing reference and topic many times over.

However, there will come a day when that verse is yours and you will not forget it. It becomes a part of you. This only happens with many repetitions over time.

The journey of a thousand miles

Some one said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. This is true of scripture memory. You have to get started. Start with one topic, and one verse. Master it, before you add to it. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Or as they say in Africa, "you can eat an elephant one bite at a time." The secret is to do each verse and topic well, before moving on to others and getting discouraged. Memorize at a pace that fits you. Take pride in what you've memorized well, then go on to others. Being consistent is what pays off. Before you know it, your one verse and topic have become many. That's why we suggest you start with the Nav Wheel. It's simple, easy and helpful.

Write it out on a card

You should write or type your verses out on a small card you can carry with you everywhere you go. It should look like this:

Parenting Eph. 6: 4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Parenting Eph. 6:4

By having your verses on cards, you can “redeem the time” by using your spare time as you go about your day. This keeps God’s Word in the center of your day and it doesn’t become a burden. You just hide the word in your heart as you go about your routine of the day.

Find an accountability partner

Finally, try to find a person to hold you accountable as you memorize. Perhaps you and another person can memorize together. A two-strand cord is hard to break. You will encourage each other, and bond together as you study and memorize. Whenever possible, recite your verses to each other. This helps you be accountable to yourself, to God and your partner.

How to Read, Interpret, and Apply Scripture A layman's hermeneutics

The Goal

In **2 Timothy 3:15-17**, our purpose in reading scripture is to be equipped thoroughly for every good work. To do this we must approach Scripture with the purpose to hear something from God that enhances my relationship to God thru Jesus Christ.

Thus the goal is to see Jesus in His Word to me, *“to make you wise unto salvation thru Christ” v15*

As you read Scripture, Scripture reads you, questions you, reveals your thoughts (Heb. 4:12) - and it leads to a Person, not just truths or principles. All Scripture points to Christ's death and resurrection; to God's forgiveness, thus leading you to a personal relationship with God through Christ.

Approach Scripture with a strong desire to be fully equipped to be what I am called of God to be, and to do what I am called of God to do.

- Don't leave the Word until like Jacob of old *“you have laid hold of that which has laid hold of you”*
- Wrestle with the text until it yields to you, and you find it to be honey to your taste & gold to your soul.

Six good questions the interpreter can ask:

1. Where does the Text fit in the narrative of Bible history?

Each Bible text must be interpreted in light of God's bigger story of redemption & restoration. See the Bible not as many stories or stories within stories; but see it as God's BIG story. The Bible only has one story, a story of Father/God redeeming mankind and restoring what was lost in the Garden.

1) Where does the text fit into this bigger Story?

On a time line, where does the text fit into the greater story of *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” 2 Cor. 5:19?* Is it before the patriarchs-Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Is it before the Law of Moses or after? Is it in the Gospels and thus before the fullness of the Spirit in the Church age?

2) Ask yourself, “What covenant was in effect when it was written”?

Is this text an old covenant truth (or promise) or is it a fulfilled new covenant truth. How you decide this, will greatly affect how you interpret the text.

2. What would the original hearers have heard?

Without asking this question you will fall into speculation, allegory, and spiritualizing the text. Ask, “How did the 1st recipients receive or view its meaning”? In order answer this question you must read and understand the text in its original context. There are at least two kinds of context for a passage of Scripture.

Literary context:

The interpreter must have knowledge that the Scriptures include various kinds of literature and thus require different approaches to interpretation. First ask yourself, “What kind of literature is the book or the text”?

Is it a narrative? Many books in the Bible are narratives. A narrative is a story or a drama being told. This includes books such as Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Numbers, 1st & 2nd Samuel, 1st & 2nd Kings, Acts, and others.

Is it wisdom literature? Books such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are what we call “wisdom” literature. This type of literature is different from narratives in that it is often filled with poetic language, or prose that uses hyperbole, allegory, or repeated phrases for emphasis.

Is it Prophetic literature? The prophets enforce God’s covenant with Israel by asking, “why is God doing what He is doing & what will be the results of disobedience. This literature has its own features such as the “oracle” or “vision” which are unique to the prophets.

The four Gospels: These are Holy Spirit inspired biographies of Christ’s life, message and sacrifice. Each was written by different authors for different purposes, but all are telling the same story of Christ’s life, teachings, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. The interpreter needs to know the gospel writers intended recipients and purpose to give correct meaning to the gospel he is reading.

Example: Luke was not an eye witness to Jesus ministry. He was a like a reporter collecting data from eye witnesses and writing them down. He wrote his gospel account to send to his friend Theophilus.

However, John the Apostle, an eye witness to Jesus life and teachings, tells us why he wrote his gospel. In **John 20:31** he says, “*but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*”. This is why we call the Gospel of John-the gospel of belief. John wrote his gospel story of Jesus to non-Jews; yet, Matthew’s gospel is very much written to convince Jews that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, the promised Son of David. The theme of Matthew’s gospel is “fulfilled”.

Is it a parable? A parable is a unique kind of literature. It is an earthly story with a heavenly (eternal) meaning. The details of a parable are often not meant to be taken literally. It uses illustrative, pictorial, and dramatic language. If the reader concludes this parable is literally truth, he will make great mistakes and misunderstand God’s true meaning.

For example, in Luke chapter 8 is Christ’s parable of the sower and the seed. This story is highly symbolic, not meant to be taken literally. In Luke 8:19, Jesus says, “*The seed is the word of God*”. You know don’t you that a farmer’s seed put into soil is not literally the same as the Holy Spirit putting God’s Word into your heart. It is the symbolic language of a parable.

Is it apocalyptic literature? Such is the book of Revelation, which is highly symbolic, requiring some knowledge of this type of literature to correctly understand its intended meaning. Its images of dragons, angels, demons, wars, and monsters with seven heads can be bewildering to those not familiar with this Jewish apocalyptic prophetic style.

Is it an epistle? The epistles are letters written to persons or churches. Letters from apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude are apostolic letters written to real people and churches, but written under the Holy Spirit's guidance and inspiration.

So, the literary context demands reading the text carefully, considering the words, sentences, and paragraphs preceding and following a passage. The literary context locates the passage within the larger purposes of a book.

Example: See **Luke 17:5** where the disciples said to Jesus, "*Increase our faith*".

The context will show this is not a prayer for more faith, but the opposite- it is a statement of doubt. If you did not read "*Lord, increase our faith*" in its immediate context you would miss its true meaning.

Notice also that a literary context looks for the place of the text in the entire book. Ask yourself, "What is the nature of the purpose of the Book"? Our goal is to discover the author's original intent.

Example: Any time you see a "therefore" in the writings of Paul, you must go back to the preceding paragraph, or even chapters, to see what the "therefore" is referring to. By doing this, you discover what the "therefore" is "there- for". It is there for a reason!

Romans 12:1 begins, "*therefore, I urge you brethren...*" Here, Paul's "therefore" is based upon all God's mercies sited in **Romans 3-11**. Paul is saying that because of all that God has done for us in Christ, we therefore should present our life before him as a living sacrifice in service to His glory.

Historical context

What is the historical background of a text that might either shed light on its meaning or culturally influence its interpretation? This must include the reader's knowledge of the culture, place in history, customs, idioms, family life, morals and social structures of the date and time the passage or book was written. Ask yourself, "How did the 1st recipients receive or view its meaning"? What did the author intend for them to hear?

A good example is the apostle Paul writing to the Roman church saying "*Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated*" (**Romans 9:13**). What does this mean? Surely God does not hate Esau? When Paul wrote this to his recipients in Rome they understood this quote from Malachi 1:21. The Jews in Rome to whom he was writing had knowledge of the Scriptures to understand the story of Jacob and Esau. This is why a serious Bible student needs the following study aids:

- A good Study Bible
- A Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia
- A scholarly Bible Commentary

(Many of these Bible aids are available on the internet for your use)

3. How does the Text relate to the Christ event?

Ask yourself, "How does this text relate to Christ- the Living Word of God"? Jesus told us to search the Scriptures looking for him on every page. He said in **John 5:39**, "*Search the Scriptures; it is these that testify of me*". See also Christ's teaching on this in **Luke 24:25-27**.

Thus every Scripture must be interpreted Christologically. This means that when reading a text or passage of Scripture, the interpreter is looking for how the text, especially an old covenant text, foreshadows the Messiah, Jesus, or the Church.

This is the meaning of **Hebrews 1:1-2**, “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*”

4. How does the whole of the Bible comment on the text and on the partial?

The interpreter must let the fullness of Scripture unfold the partial. This is another way of saying that the BIG story of the Bible must always influence how we read and understand the smaller stories.

Example: In Exodus chapter 20 Moses receives the Ten Commandments. We need the new covenant teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to rightly interpret the Law, and the teaching of Rabbi Paul in Galatians to tell us the purpose of the Law. Thus the new covenant fulfills the old.

5. What in this text applies to me that I need to respond to?

Scripture must not be read just for study or your personal knowledge. Since all Scripture is pointing to Christ, we read in order to worship, to serve, and to magnify Him. We must ask, “How does this ancient text relate to me today?”

The reader can ask himself four questions to help in application of Scripture to one’s life:

- What should I do?
- What should I be? (realizing who I am in Christ)
- Where should I go?
- How can I see?
-

Here are some other questions you can ask to aid in the personal application of truth:

- Try rewriting the text in your own language seeking application to your life.
- How does being “in Christ” relate to my understanding of the text?
- What is required of me if I apply the meaning of the text to me?
- How can I take what God has said to me and give it to someone else?
- What action do I take based on this?

6. How does God get His truth into us?

1. He speaks eternally thru His inspired Word=the Holy Scriptures -**2nd Timothy 3:16, 17**

2. God speaks to us thru His Spirit- see **John 14-15**

We must always acknowledge the unity of the Spirit and the Word- we cannot understand truth apart from the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth. It is the Holy Spirit who can “rightly divide” the Word He wrote. You must prayerfully ask Him to be your teacher.

3. God speaks to us thru His Spirit in His gifted Saints.

Here are some of the ways the Holy Spirit gets truth into us:

- 1) The Holy Spirit gives us illuminated understanding.
- 2) The Holy Spirit can interpret His Word (which He inspired)
- 3) The Spirit will guide us to consensus thru the community of Believers. (Acts 15)
- 4) The Spirit has given the Church grace gifts thru whom He speaks.

The Holy Spirit speaks truth to us through spiritually gifted believers- pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists etc.

Preparing a Sermon from the Word of God

An expository sermon is a message from which the major points come directly from the Scripture under consideration. This is exegesis. Too many times preachers are more prone to eisegesis, than they are to exegesis. They read into the Word, rather than extract truth from the Word.

A good sermon is interesting to listen to. The three most important minutes a speaker is on his feet are the 1st three minutes and the last three! You have three minutes to get the crowds attention, or you may never get it! So begin with your best attention getter. This attention getter is to be related to the subject matter of the message.

Good Bible preaching is really an uncomplicated art when practiced consistently. Each major point in the message that comes out of the text itself will have three parts to it:

1. EXPLANATION
2. APPLICATION
3. ILLUSTRATION

For Example: Let's take a simple verse like John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Preparation: See if you can state the whole sermon idea in a sentence. For example, let's write a sermon on this verse called, **The Greatest Story Ever Told.**

Key sentence: This verse tells us the story of the greatest lover, the greatest love, the greatest gift, and the greatest choice the world has ever heard.

Now you create an outline that explains, applies and illustrates these truths.

I. **The Greatest Lover...for God..**

Explanation: (the Who, What, Where, and How of the message.)

Here is where you answer some basic questions:

1. To whom was it written
Look to the historical setting
Why did God say this to them
What was its meaning then?
Note: Jesus says these words to Nicodemus, a ruler and religious leader. In the preceding verses Jesus uses an illustration (verses 14,15) of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness to show the cross as evidence of God's love.
2. What does the text say?
Look at it in several translations.
Review it in commentaries
Look up key words in a concordance
Cross reference verses
3. How did it happen?

4. What does it say to us today?
Look for the eternal principle in the earthly setting. In this verse seek to explain these things. Explain who God is. God is love (1st John 4:8.) Anything else that gives truthful information is put here. God is just, merciful, God is wrath, etc. but God is love. And love must have an object.

Application: (the “so what” of the message).

After explanation we come to application. Just as Explanation is the Who, What and Where of the sermon, even so application is the “so what?” of the sermon. In the application portion of the message the preacher applies the truth to his congregation. He answers the unspoken “so what” of the listener. He may ask, “What is your view of God?” “How do you see him?” The Kikuyu people of Kenya for centuries called God, “Mungo”, and believe he lives on Mount Kenya! The preacher may say, “Do you know that God is love?”

Application makes the message personal. Jesus and the prophets all did this. They applied the truth to their listeners. Peter at Pentecost, turned to those Jewish leaders responsible for Jesus’ death, and said, *“this same Jesus... you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.... and Peter said to them, “Repent...”* (Acts 2: 23-38)

The point here is that preaching must be applied truth. If a man cannot go away knowing what God wants him to do or be, then he either wasn’t listening or the preacher didn’t do his job very well.

Illustration: (the visual “windows” of the message)

Now we need a story, a picture to visualize the truth. The illustrations are the windows that let in the light of God’s truth to the soul. Long after a listener forgets the rest of your sermon, they will remember the stories. Jesus knew this and preached picture sermons so men could remember. Luke 15 is a picture sermon. He tells the Pharisees a story of a man who had two sons in order to teach them about God’s Grace and Love. In John 3:16 the preacher can give them an illustration to show that God is love.

II. The Greatest Love...so loved the world..

Explanation: there are different kinds of love. This word for love is “agape;” it means unconditional love. Only God can love totally unconditionally. Only God can look beyond your faults and see your need. Because we are guilty sinners we need this kind of love. This is GRACE from the Father’s heart. Notice that God’s love has an object, the entire human race. He loves the Whole world. None are excluded.

Application: Has God’s love reached your world? God can love you and your heart be closed to Him by your sin and unbelief. There is a God shaped hole in every human heart that only God’s love can fill.

Illustration: Now we need a picture again, a window to let in the Light. A good story, poem, saying, even humor to illustrate this truth.

And on it goes through each point, explanation, application, and illustration. This is a simple tool to create a Biblical sermon.

ONE POINT-SEVERAL APPLICATIONS

One more thought is helpful here. Not every sermon has to have three main points. It does not even need two points. Some sermons only have one main idea. For example, this John 3:16 verse can be presented

as one main idea- That is, “how much God loves the lost”. If you choose to use only one point, you can vary the three parts of your message by using Explanation, Application, Illustration, in different orders.

Mix it up

There are times you can use two illustrations together, or explanation, then illustrate, then apply. You can mix up if it better serves communication. Your audience and how they “hear” you are vital to how you communicate.

For example: In African cultures the people are story tellers. Their ancestry is an oral tradition. Also, the African way of thinking is not analytical like the western mind. So, if your audience is African-use many stories (illustrations) then use the application to apply the stories to real life.

You can even use explanation to give biblical authority to your illustrating and applying.

The Conclusion

Finally, every sermon needs **a conclusion**. The ending or conclusion is when you ask the hearers to respond, to take action. You want them to do something in obedience to God’s spoken Word. The Conclusion is when you tell them what they should do. Again, you should be brief, be decisive, and be clear about what you are asking for. The action is related to the body of the sermon. It states what the sermon said.

SECTION THREE

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