

Giving Talks

A New Life of Spirit Led Ministry to Others

There is one rule that governs all talks: Make sure you have something to say. We can't help you with that (unless you want to use our materials—please do!), but we can supply the coaching for how to know when you've got something to say and what to do with it when you do.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
John 8:31-32 ESV

The Goal of a Good Talk

The goal is not primarily to give a good talk. Don't focus on that. The goal is to get some truth, some message that is really important to you across to them. Just make sure that you believe it with all of your heart and that you see why it liberates you to believe it. Then you will want them to get it as much as you have. This actually frees you from being self-focused and sets your heart on fire to share a truth that is burning inside you to be expressed. So, get your passion and clarity up about what you want to share and let it become so important to you that it drowns out pestering concerns for how the message (and you) will be received.



Philips Brooks wrote that we should teach truth, not just so people will know it, but so that they will be saved by believing it. You will communicate effectively what you are passionate about them getting! Know and be convinced of what they need to get out of your teaching and they will naturally want to pay attention. Brooks also said that all good preaching or teaching is eternal truth brought through human personality. Never strain at this. The more natural, simple and genuine you are, the more you will truly be yourself as the Lord created you to be—and your teaching will be all the better for it. Don't compare yourself to others. Just fall in love with Jesus, then love the truth He has given you to share, then get yourself out of the way, and share it like there's no tomorrow. The real you will come through along with the His truth. Both will be a blessing.

Elements of a Good Talk

A. The Core Message

The core message is like bones in our body. It gives strength and unity to the whole talk. Everything relates back to the core message and the core message provides purpose and



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context to all the secondary elements. The core message can be summed up in one sentence. It is the main thing that you want to get across, the main thing you want them to take away. Without clarity about the core message, very likely you will wander about and your listeners will become confused. But if all a good talk needed was a powerful core message, you could speak for 30 seconds and sit down!

B. Prayer

Pray to receive the message. Pray over all the elements in the message. Pray for the people you will be speaking to. Pray for the Lord to help you get your heart in just the right position: trusting Him and loving them. Pray for His anointing. Pray for Him to have His way. Then, release your cares to Him and step out in faith. When it comes to being prepared (in your head) for a talk or being pre-prayer-ed (in your heart), take prayer every time. Leave prayer out and the Lord may let you see just how well you can give a talk without Him! Depend too much on head knowledge and you will be “headed” for disaster.

C. Secondary Elements

Don't try to fit all of these secondary elements into your talk. That would be like trying to wear all of the clothes in your wardrobe in one day. Not every talk has to include all of these elements, but a good talk will include some of them. Pray and let the Lord lead you.

1) Scripture, Scripture, Scripture

Pick one or two key scriptures that illustrate your core message and seek to plant them deeply in their minds and hearts. This is what the Holy Spirit will most powerfully use to liberate them as they try to walk out the message they've heard. Scatter other scriptures generously about, but don't clutter the talk with them. Less is more when it comes to what people will remember in the take away.

2) Key Insights

Give credibility to what you are saying by adding insights from Christian leaders, or from facts you've gleaned from articles that are relevant.

3) Personal Testimony

There is no better way to illustrate or flesh out a teaching than with your own relevant experience. There are, however, some pernicious pitfalls to avoid. See below.

4) Humor

Bring in appropriate jokes or use your own. Remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, enabling us take in the serious things He wants us to digest.



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5) Ministry Times

Strike while the iron is hot! At the right time—as the Spirit prompts you—lead the group in confessional times of repentance and ministry. If the teaching is anointed, the hearts of your listeners will be touched. This creates tremendously fruitful opportunities to harvest their prayers or prune away their burdens. See below.

6) Beware of Long Readings

Nowadays we seem to have little ability to stay focused on long readings or quotations. Unless it is very good and you can read it well, do some ruthless editing of your favorite material. Trim the fat; keep it lean and you will hold their attention.

7) Tone

To paraphrase Muhammad Ali the boxer, “float like a butterfly,” but let the Lord “sting like a bee.” Our job is not to try to convict people, but to simply put the truth before them and let the Holy Spirit do it.

Testimony Guidelines

Personal testimony is powerful, but it is also dangerous—just like 220 volts of electricity. With your story used the right way you can electrify an audience. Use it the wrong way and you will electrocute them instead. Just because scripture says that we defeat the enemy “with the word of our testimony” doesn’t mean that it works every time, regardless of how we use it. Wisdom is required for the proper use of all of God’s gifts, especially the most powerful ones. If you would rather leave your listeners exhilarated and alive, rather than bored to death, please follow these tips.

1) Never Overshadow the Truth

Don’t let your experiences eclipse the real message. Personal experiences illustrate truth, they don’t establish it. The truths you are teaching are what the Holy Spirit will use to help them in their time of trial, not your stories. Also, don’t let the telling of your own story secretly capture your heart. That would become an inroad for pride. Let the truth your story is intended to illustrate be what your heart desires to express. That will lead you (and them) closer to Jesus, who is the Truth we are all seeking to live for.

2) Follow the 80/20 Principle

80% teaching; 20% personal testimony. Think of truths as the meat and potatoes of the meal you are serving; personal testimonies are the gravy that makes truth taste great. Since no one can live on a diet of gravy, balance things out. As with any other art, once you become masterful at teaching you can safely bend and stretch the rules. No novice can. The 80/20 principle also applies to the operations of the two kingdoms. Keep a healthy balance between what the enemy did in your life to take you captive and what the Lord did to set you free—don’t give the work of the enemy too much air time!



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3) Keep It Short and Sweet

Although we tend to be forever fascinated by our own stories, the funny thing is, others aren't. Some select few can tell a long, winding personal story and not lose the interest of anyone in the room, but that's a *rare* gift. Best to be brief—cut to the chase—and make sure everyone is with you. Don't be fooled. People will give you polite attention because it's your story and they don't want to hurt your feelings. That's not the same thing as an anointing.

4) Serve It Steaming H.O.T.

Being Honest, Open and Transparent really draws out the anointing of the Spirit and draws in your listeners. We all love to catch privileged glimpses into the secrets of other lives—the HOT-er the better. This satisfies that inward hunger to know others more intimately. Many times, the messenger becomes the message, showing us ways of living with God and people that we hardly dreamed possible. Just make sure that you aren't giving secrets away that will embarrass you later. There are things we don't need to know about each other and ways of sharing that can backfire, as the following three examples illustrate.

5) Beware of Glory Stories

For every two personal victory stories, be sure to tell at least one story of failure or of struggle to get something that was hard for you. People can relate better to you if they see your common humanity. It gives them hope when they see that you are just like them: goofed up and having a hard time getting it. Beware of the subtle pride that wants to appear glorious in victory, even if you imagine you are giving glory to God.

6) Avoid Gory Stories

On the other hand, don't share about areas of your life that are still raw and bleeding. Things that are too unhealed will cast a shadow over them, distracting them from truths you are teaching. Worse, you may speak from the darkness of your unhealed perspective instead of from His Light. Be careful not to use the class you are teaching as an occasion for personal therapy.

7) Resist Grousing Stories

Avoid stories that put another person in a bad light—and you in a good light. This may be an unconscious way of getting revenge on people who have hurt you and also of making you a victim or hero in the class's eyes. If you have to share something negative about someone, be sure you do it in a way that honors their dignity as a person. Don't encourage people to judge someone with you, or laugh at anyone in a way that diminishes them.



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Ministry while Teaching

Sometimes the mood of the room will shift while you are teaching. Of course, you can change the mood intentionally by reaching for humor or by quoting from something deathly serious. You can disrupt the mood accidentally by saying something confusing, or not quite true, or by straying off the mark. But suppose you are right on track and sense an anointing that is gracing what you are doing. Any unintended shift may be the Lord's way of calling you to lead the class through prayers that will help them process what you have just been teaching.

One obvious example of this would be a talk on forgiveness. If you suddenly sense you are losing them, it just may be that the Holy Spirit has them thinking about someone they need to forgive. They feel the tug of this and start remembering what happened. All you will feel is a sense that they are distracted by something. Just pause the lesson and ask if that's the case. If it is, ask them if it would be alright for you to lead them in a prayer to release forgiveness. Then walk them through it leaving nothing to chance. Most people need to be taught how to do these things. Model it for them or lead them word for word, however seems best.

John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard movement, would purposefully teach until the Holy Spirit began to fall on the people. Then he would immediately stop teaching and begin praying for healing. Only the Lord knows how to mend broken hearts, dig up root issues, or bring closure to old wounds. We have to learn to watch for His timing. He looks into every heart far better than we can and knows when people are ready to surrender, trust and pray. Always ask permission to open an issue for confession and prayer. Then, follow the leading and let the Lord bring the message home!

More to Explore

[Leading Prayer Ministry](#) This is only one of many ways of doing prayer ministry, but it has been highly effective. The great thing in the care of souls, as in medical practice, is to make sure you do more good than harm. This "method"—the ministry of the keys—has led to many happy outcomes and it is frequently needed, for it deals with the "common colds" of the spiritual life. It has its limits, but it is a great, safe way of getting started.

[Values and Guidelines](#) Thanks to the ministry of inner healing and deliverance, there are countless thousands, perhaps millions, of Christians who have been marvelously healed and set free. Sadly, there are also others who have been thrown deeper into bondage and pain, because the enemy was able to use over-zealous and under-trained ministers to cause damage. When the footing is potentially treacherous—and you know it—it is always best to slow down, walk carefully and pray a lot! Let these values and guidelines give you balance and show the way.

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Scriptures on Teaching Truth

So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God." Luke 20:21 ESV

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17 ESV

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. Ephesians 4:15 ESV

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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