

# Preaching the Gospel

**A monthly magazine for preachers and those who want to preach.**

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## Check Your Scripture References

Every preacher has had the experience of finding that the scripture reference in his notes is not correct. Sometimes he can figure out what the reference should be, but he may be under so much pressure that he can't remember.

Sometimes he can work in the wrong verse as though it is the right verse, but this doesn't usually work very well and is, in a sense, a bit dishonest. Usually he just has to apologize and go on to the next point.

It is amazing how easy it is to type the wrong reference. Just one mistake will make the reference read 2 Peter instead of 1 Peter, or Romans 9:3 instead of Romans 6:3. The same mistake can be made if you are writing by hand.

Therefore we preachers should get into the habit of checking each scripture reference in our completed notes before we preach, AND TURN TO EACH REFERENCE AND READ IT. Only then can we be sure that each reference is correct.

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## Memorizing Scripture

When I started full-time preaching, one of the elders was a retired preacher. Bro. Speck told me that when he attended Bible college the teacher of the class in Romans required the students to memorize the entire book! Remarkable—and very useful.

I am not keen on memory work, and as a result I have memorized only a relatively few verses. I am the poorer because of it.

It seems today that it is not the habit of preachers to recite much scripture by memory. One of the reasons may be that there are different translations. In the days of Bro. Speck the only translation used was the King James Version, and it was used by everyone. When I went to college, the preferred translation of the teachers was the American Standard Version while the people in the audience were using the King James Version. Today there is a multitude of translations, with most preachers preferring to use the New King James Version or the New American Standard Bible (my choice), but the people who are being taught may have the King James, the New International Version, or any of many others. I am being introduced to different translations frequently.

But I think it is still a good idea to memorize key scriptures. The preacher can start by memorizing the text of his sermon. Memorizing helps the preacher because each word becomes important. And when he can answer a question by quoting a verse, it helps build trust that the preacher really is a careful student of the Bible.

## Get Me a Job Preaching

**Bill Hall, Athens, AL, USA**

We have been asked to write concerning the danger of professionalism among preachers, a danger of which many are totally unaware.

We must preface our warnings with a grateful acknowledgment that there are many faithful and dedicated men throughout the world who have devoted their lives to preaching. Many of these are young men whose spirituality, love for truth, and concern for souls have compelled them to share the gospel with others. They are willing to go where they are needed rather than to the places where salary and prestige are the greatest. They see preaching as a service to be rendered in a spirit of sacrifice and unselfishness. There is plenty of room in God's kingdom for such men.

But preaching can also be viewed as a career to be pursued with self-seeking goals and ambition. There was a time when few would have preached because of financial considerations. But times have changed. Preachers' salaries have increased. Churches are clamoring for preachers. Opportunities are there, while employment in other fields is difficult to find. In fact, there are probably few jobs where a young man can begin at a higher salary than in preaching, and especially if he chooses to push the church for every penny "he can get out of them." Besides, there are no educational or job training requirements. The only requirements in some cases are a smattering of Bible knowledge, a good personality, and a gift of gab. Add to this the glamour of standing before audiences and being "looked up to," and obviously the temptation can be great for a young man who can't find a job otherwise to decide to preach.

Such men may accomplish some good if they indeed preach Christ, and we shall rejoice in that good (Philippians 1:12-18). But they themselves are very vulnerable to the temptation to compromise, to flatter, to "water down" their teaching (or toughen it in some cases), or, in short, to do whatever is necessary to enhance their position and "advance" their career. They are also "sitting ducks" for disillusionment. They have begun preaching for the wrong reasons, and their mistake endangers both their own souls and the welfare of the Lord's church.

To all who preach or who are thinking of preaching, we would suggest: If, like Jeremiah, you find God's word in your heart as a burning fire, and you cannot stay; if, like Paul, you feel a driving compulsion to preach the gospel; if, like the apostles, you cannot but speak the things which they saw and heard; if, like Timothy, you have genuine concern for the state of others; if you would preach, whether supported or not supported, whether in season or out of season, whether "looked up to" by the church or persecuted by the church; if you would preach, as did all first century preachers, even under the threat of death, then by all means preach, and receive and be grateful for whatever moral and financial support the churches give you. But, if otherwise, for your sake and the gospel's, find some other means of making a living.

--from *Two Men*, pages 143-144.

Editor's note: The problem of men preaching primarily for money is especially acute where there is much poverty, such as in Africa, the Philippines and South America. It is for this reason that churches should investigate thoroughly before sending support to native preachers, and should keep as well-informed about them as possible. I know of many discouraging cases.

Few are as bold as the one who came to Foy Short in Rhodesia asking to be "his preacher." Foy replied, "You don't even know what I teach." He answered, "Just tell me, and I will preach it." But many are in much the same condition of preaching, or wanting to preach, because of the money.

## Using Kenneth's Templates

In January this year I printed the sixth of my son Kenneth's articles on how to prepare a sermon. He sent me a seventh which contains instructions for using his method on the computer. The instructions are clear and detailed. He also sent me two templates—the first for writing out your notes and the second for organizing them into a sermon outline.

I started using this system and found that some of the instructions needed to be clearer and a couple of things needed changing. These changes have been made and I believe the instructions and templates are now very useful. I am using this system when preparing sermons.

I want to send you these instructions and templates. Request "[Kenneth's Article No. 7](#)" from me at [bible@netactive.co.za](mailto:bible@netactive.co.za). If you want to reread Kenneth's articles, you will find them on [www.knowyourbible.co.za](http://www.knowyourbible.co.za) in the issues of Vol. 1 Nos. 5-9.

### TO BE PUT ON THE E-MAIL LIST

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**Share the magazine with others. We want it to be as useful as possible.** PKW

### Preacher Training in the 1830's

Earl Irvin West recounts this experience of Benjamin Franklin, who went on to become an outstanding gospel preacher. This occurred when Franklin was in his 20's and just starting to preach:

Nor was Ben Franklin without his critics. John Longley was by now fifty-six, "an easy and fluent speaker" himself and just at the age to appoint himself a severe critic of young preachers. When Ben began his preaching career, Longley lived at nearby Yorktown [Indiana]. Ben, his brother Daniel, and a Brother Chambers went over to Yorktown to preach in a cooper shop [where wooden buckets and barrels were made]. Eight men and no women were present. The prevalent view was that in any audience, if preachers were present, they should be invited to speak. Longley, however, refused to preach and instead, had Chambers lead a prayer and Ben spoke. After Ben finished, Daniel exhorted. Now it was Longley's turn. "Brother Chambers, you have not had a chance to pray any for the past six weeks." The surprised Chambers inquired why Longley made the statement. "Because you prayed so long tonight," was the answer. To Ben he directed a question, "How many times do you think you said, 'My Friends' tonight?" Franklin replied, "I don't know." Longley answered, "one hundred and fifty times." To Daniel, who had a habit of speaking too rapidly, he stated, "Brother Daniel, your words come from your mouth like shot from an old musket [shot gun]." Despite his straightforward censures Franklin would always love this dedicated man who influenced him so much in his early preaching experiences.—*Elder Ben Franklin: Eye of the Storm*, pp. 9-10.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." (Proverbs 27:6) "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; it is oil upon the head." (Psalm 141:5)

West also wrote this about Franklin's development as a preacher:

The forces that shaped young Ben's mind for his future work were those readily available to him in the rugged pioneer country of Indiana between 1835 and 1840. He read the Scriptures constantly and memorized large portions of them making it understandable why his preaching and reading in future years were so full of Scripture. The preachers he heard—Elijah Martindale, Samuel Rogers, John Longley and John O'Kane—all of whom were superior pulpit men, pointed Franklin in the direction of pulpit excellence. Equally important was Franklin's inner spiritual development upon which he always placed the greatest priority. He prayed fervently and frequently and was determined to possess the highest spiritual traits—manly independence, loyalty to God above everything else, humility and holiness of life. From his later editorials Franklin was aware that the secret of real pulpit power is the quiet, inner spiritual development of the preacher.—pp. 14-15.

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Later in his life Franklin spoke to a Biblical Class about "*The Chief Elements of True and Proper Success in the Preacher of Jesus*". He listed:

- (1) a fixed, settled and determined purpose to be a preacher;
- (2) a man of fixed, settled and determined integrity;
- (3) a man of faith;
- (4) the preacher of Jesus to have proper power and influence in his work, must be an industrious man;
- (5) the preacher to be effective must be a man of spirit and earnestness;
- (6) the preacher must be a man of prayer, and,
- (7) the preacher must be a man of humility.

--pp. 47-48

It would be well for every man who wants to preach, or who is now preaching, to reflect carefully on this list of qualities. They clearly come from the Bible and from the experience of a great man.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*The Head Coverings of 1 Corinthians 11* by Paul K. Williams. Available from Preceptor Book Store and from my distributor, IIP, 305 Coffee Avenue NE, Russellville AL 35653 for \$6.95. Order through their web page [www.spiritualservicesupply.com](http://www.spiritualservicesupply.com) (In South Africa—R40 postpaid from me.)

*Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome* by Bryan Vinson, Sr., rewritten in simple English with notes by Paul K. Williams. Published by J.R.B. Publications, P.O. Box 237, Bowling Green, KY 42102-0237. [bobbuchanon@mindspring.com](mailto:bobbuchanon@mindspring.com). Your favorite book store should stock it. I think the price is \$6.95 or \$7.95. (R40 in South Africa)

*Preaching With Power!* by Gene Tope is based on the book *HOW TO PREPARE A SERMON* by H. E. Knott. Gene rewrote it and added chapters, and the result is a very useful book for preachers and aspiring preachers. Contact Gene for information. [genetope@juno.com](mailto:genetope@juno.com)