

## HANDOUT FOR LESSON 12

### PREPARING TO TEACH

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#### THE TEACHER'S STYLE

Delivery style is ultimately a matter of personal conviction on the part of the teacher as the teacher seeks to communicate the truth clearly and passionately.

The teacher needs to make sure that he is heard as well as possible in every situation, but especially if people are not used to his voice and teaching. Therefore projection of the voice is important.

It is possible for people to hear the sound of your voice without being able to distinguish your words. There is the need for *clear and clean articulation* on the teacher's part.

The sound of the voice and, specifically, variations in the sound of the voice are a significant facet of oral communication. Some of these *vocal variables* are:

*Pauses* are very significant within the flow of oral communication. In the context of teaching, pauses invite attention or reflection, depending on how the teacher uses them. Pausing after a word or statement and then repeating a key word or statement is a meaningful way to stress the importance of what is being said. Pauses help people stay with you and think with you.

*Volume*, specifically change in volume, is another tool for emphasis. This could mean an increase or decrease in volume. Change in the use of volume draws attention. Consistent volume at whatever level loses impact as a tool for specific emphasis within the message. This is just as true for the more “conversational” teacher as it is for the “high-volumed” one. Let the nature of the content and the types of truths that are being declared impact the volume used. Also, recognize that the setting, size of audience, and acoustics will impact general volume levels used.

The *rate of speech* has to do with the actual speed of delivery, words per minute. The teacher needs to watch out for a “wooden” or almost unnatural continuous rate of speech. Generally speaking, there is a natural variety in the rate of speech in regular conversation. A faster rate often indicates special excitement over what is being said. A slower, deliberate rate is often used when care is needed to get across more important or complicated information.

*Pitch* has to do with the “tonal qualities produced in vocalization.” Changes in pitch intonation and inflection can impact the meaning and expression of the truth. The way the speaker elevates or lowers the pitch in words or within phrases or sentences can be vital for the intended emphasis. Therefore, the teacher should avoid patterns of pitch that become difficult to listen to and have little to do with the truth being communicated.

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The full notes of the teacher and an audio of the classroom presentation may be found at  
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The *visual presence and impact* of the teacher are significant. Gestures, facial expressions, and the whole ethos of the teacher ought to be Christ-like and “message-like.” The body language and facial expressions of the teacher should be reflective and expressive of the message itself.

*Gestures and facial expressions* are a great means of framing and extending the meaning of the words spoken. An appropriate gesture can visually drive a word, truth, or concept home in a powerful way. The teacher’s facial expressions can affirm and confirm a truth in ways that even argumentation and illustration cannot.

*Interrogatives*, both rhetorical and direct, help people to think through the message with you. Such questions help to focus the attention of people on the main truths or issues at stake.

*Application of the truth*—regularly, personally, practically, and specifically—keeps the teacher in touch with his audience and calls for attention. The teacher is not just “throwing out” thoughts; he is proclaiming a relevant, applicable message because it’s God’s message to the specific audience.

*Illustrations* can help to maintain attention. Illustrations invite people to *see*, not just to *hear*. Illustrations can bridge beautifully between explanation and application, and they can help to reinforce the application.

*Keeping to the subject* is essential. Meandering through a message is not only hard to follow, it can give the impression that the subject is not significant and that the preaching event is not critical.

*Speaking from the heart* and *to the heart* are essential. If the teacher is speaking passionately from his own heart, this demands and deserves attention. The importance of the truth *to the teacher* is seen and sensed. Also, the audience senses the concern that the teacher has not only for the truth, but for the audience.

*Authority* calls for attention and maintains it. The teacher has an authority for the teaching event. His authority should be expressed in a message that clarifies God’s will and ways for the people. People are confronted with God’s Word for them—its implications and demands. Authority is not the same thing as volume in delivery. Authority has to do with being mastered by the Word. *Authority* is expressed in clarity and authenticity of presentation along with a boldness and passion for the truth. A person “under authority” has a derived authority from the one he is under. The teacher is under the authority of his Lord. The authority of the teacher should be matched by humility and simplicity.

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