

# High School Teachings

*5 COMMON MISTAKES*

*(AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)*

"It is a joy to recommend this excellent book."  
—DAVID S. DOCKERY

# LET THE EARTH HEAR HIS VOICE


Strategies for Overcoming  
Bottlenecks in Preaching  
God's Word

GREG R. SCHARF

# BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

*the challenge of preaching today*

# JOHN STOTT

- 
- Not a full homiletics course
  - Teaching doesn't have to be perfect



# 1. Lack of Faith

# What it looks like

- Not confident

- Afraid to make direct calls
- Overly anxious

## 1. Lack of Faith

# What it looks like

- Not confident
- Not seeking to improve
- Hate teaching

## 1. Lack of Faith



# Overcoming

**1. Lack of Faith**

[1 Corinthians 2:3-5] “I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.”

## **1. Lack of Faith**





# John Stott

*Between Two  
Worlds*

“All of us who are Christian preachers are finite, fallen, frail and fallible creatures, in biblical language ‘pots of earthenware’ ...



John Stott  
*Between Two  
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“All of us who are Christian preachers are finite, fallen, frail and fallible creatures, in biblical language ‘pots of earthenware’ ...

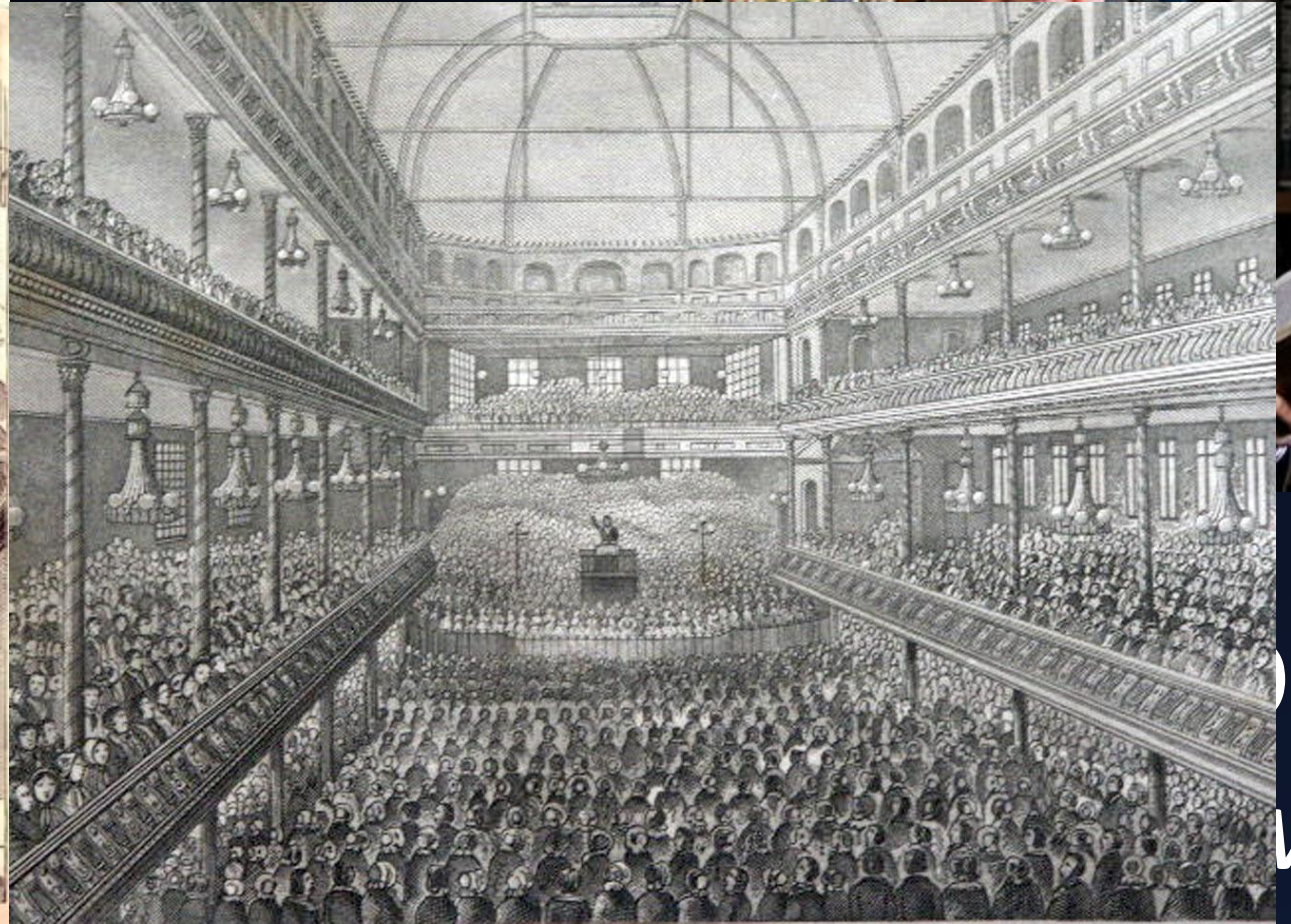
The power belongs to Christ and is exerted through his Spirit.



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I have before me, as I



*Worlds*



ott  
vo



I have heard it said that as  
Spurgeon mounted those  
stairs,



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I have heard it said that as Spurgeon mounted those stairs, with the measured tread of a heavily built man,



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I have heard it said that as Spurgeon mounted those stairs, with the measured tread of a heavily built man, he muttered to himself on each one, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'



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We may be quite sure that, after fifteen repetitions, by the time he entered his pulpit, he did believe in the Holy Spirit.



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He also urges us to do the same: “The gospel is preached in the ears of all; it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher; otherwise men would be converters of souls.



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Nor does it lie in the preacher's learning; otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die,



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but never a soul would be converted unless there were mysterious power going with it - the Holy Ghost changing the will of man.



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O Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Ghost be with the word, to give it power to convert the soul.”



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[2 Timothy 2:15] “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

## **1. Lack of Faith**

# Overcoming

- Anchor your confidence in the right place
- View your teaching ministry as a stewardship
- Set your thoughts on your students

## **1. Lack of Faith**

# Overcoming

- Where does this come up for you?
- What might be some other steps someone could take leading up to a teaching to confront these barriers?

## **1. Lack of Faith**



## 2. Lack of Clarity



# What it looks like

- Lost in notes
- Rambling, long
- Hard to remember

## 2. Lack of Clarity

# What causes it

- Procrastination
- Inadequate understanding of the text
- Trying to be too novel

## 2. Lack of Clarity

# Overcoming

- Start early and “sit with the text”
- Use the words of the passage to make your points
- Utilize “sign posts”
- Craft a “primary claim”

## 2. Lack of Clarity



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*Let the Earth  
Hear His Voice*

“At the heart of achieving valid contextualization is the construction of a simple sentence that articulates the *thrust of the text as it relates to and addresses your listeners.*



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Study of the text should  
have yielded a sentence  
that captures the *thrust of  
the text.*



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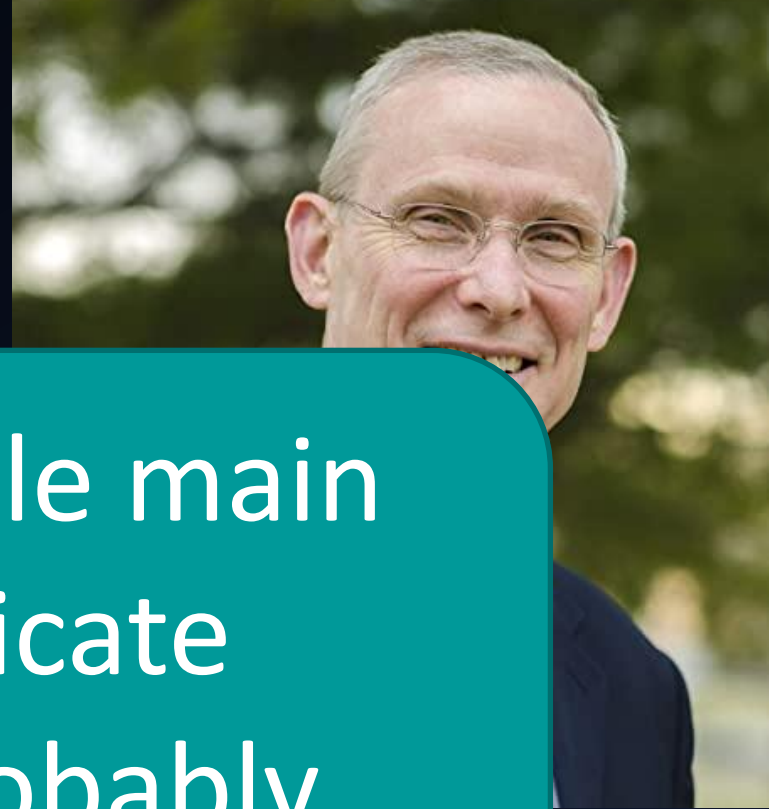
Study of the text should have yielded a sentence that captures the *thrust of the text*. Studying the congregation enables you to turn the sentence into a *primary claim sentence* that addresses that truth claim to your listeners.



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...the primary claim of the sermon should urge one

- Some passages have multiple main ideas you need to communicate
- ...but your students will probably only remember one thing!



arf  
*Let the Earth  
Hear His Voice*



# Example: Acts 13-14

- Thrust of the text: Paul and Barnabus contextualize, strategize and persevere in sharing the Gospel.
- Application: Pursue creative approaches of sharing the gospel, remind yourself that God has called us to this work, lean on friends for support in ministry.

# Example: Acts 13-14

- Through the example of Paul and Barnabas, persevere in sharing the Gospel.
- Apply the principle of sharing the Gospel: that God has called us to this work, lean on friends for support in ministry.

The Gospel is good and true, so we keep sharing it!

# Exercise: James 3:1-12

- Thrust of the text?
- Application?
- Primary Claim?



# 3. Don't Create Tension

# What it looks like

- Boring
- Students fail to connect deeply with the word

## 3. Don't Create Tension

# What causes it

- Not persuading your listeners on the stakes
- Weak antithesis

## 3. Don't Create Tension



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“We must boldly handle the major themes of human life, the incessant questions which men and women have always asked, and which the great novelists and dramatists have treated in every age:



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*Between Two Worlds*



What is the purpose of our existence? Has life any significance? Where did I come from, and where am I going to? What does it mean to be a human being, and how do humans differ from animals?



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*Between Two Worlds*

What is freedom, and how can I experience personal liberation? Why the painful tension between what I am and what I long to be? Is there a way to be rid of guilt and of a guilty conscience?



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*Between Two Worlds*

What about the hunger for love, sexual fulfilment, marriage, family life and community on the one hand, and on the other the pervasive sense of alienation, and the base, destructive passions of jealousy, malice, hate, lust and revenge?



John Stott  
*Between Two Worlds*



How can we find courage to face first life, then death, then what may lie beyond death? What hope can sustain us in the midst of our despair?



John Stott  
*Between Two Worlds*

In every generation and every culture men and women have asked these questions and debated these issues. This is the stuff from which the world's great literature is formed.



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*Between Two Worlds*

Have we Christians nothing  
to say about these things?  
Of course we have!



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*Between Two  
Worlds*

We are also convinced that Jesus Christ either has the answers to these questions or... that he throws more light on them than can be gathered from any other source. Jesus Christ, we believe, is the fulfilment of every truly human aspiration. To find him is to find ourselves”



John Stott  
*Between Two Worlds*



# Overcoming

- Craft a strong antithesis
- Ideally placed early and with emphasis
- Review your outline and ask “what have I done to *win* their attention?”

## 3. Don't Create Tension

# Overcoming

- What core questions/needs does this passage relate to? How does God speak to these?
- How might someone's faith be damaged by a failure to hear and apply this passage?
- How will Satan take advantage of a believer who fails to understand and apply this?

## **3. Don't Create Tension**

# Exercise: Apply to 2 Cor 5:1-5

- What core questions/needs does this passage relate to? How does God speak to these?
- How might someone's faith be damaged by a failure to hear and apply this passage?
- How will Satan take advantage of a believer who fails to understand and apply this?

## **3. Don't Create Tension**



# 4. Lame Discussion

# What causes it

- Wrong mindset
  - Not rewarding people for knowing how to speak
  - Not checking a box

## 4. Lame Discussion

# What causes it

- Good Discussion:
  - Fuels a high energy teaching
  - Legitimately aids the thought flow of the teaching, makes a key point
  - Sticks with students

## 4. Lame Discussion

# What causes it

- Wrong mindset
- Not spending enough time crafting questions
- Not getting feedback

## 4. Lame Discussion



# Overcoming

- Review content on teaching through discussion
- Send them out days in advance
- Facilitate the “flow in, flow out”

## 4. Lame Discussion

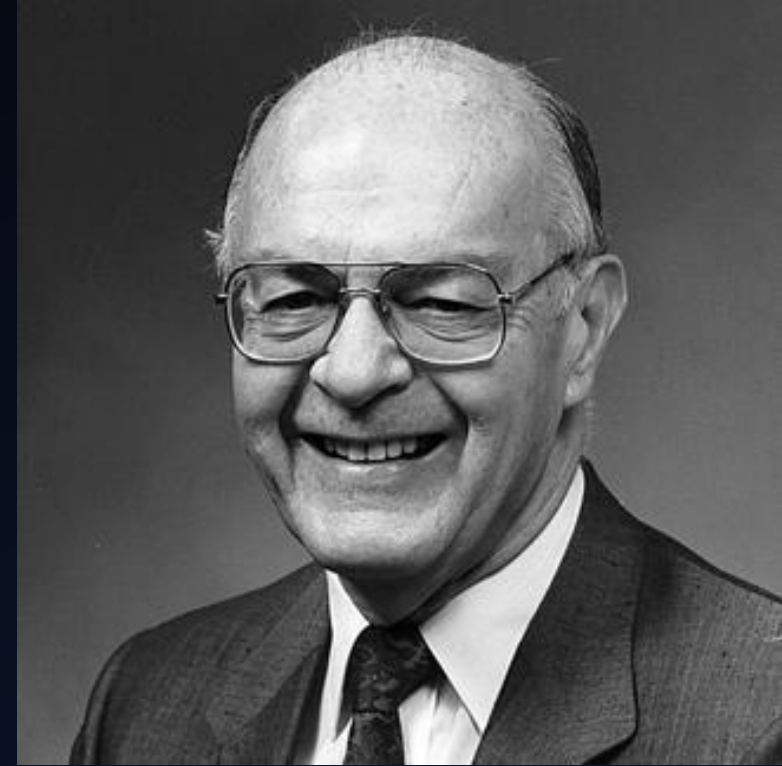


# 5. Lack of Emphasis

# What it looks like

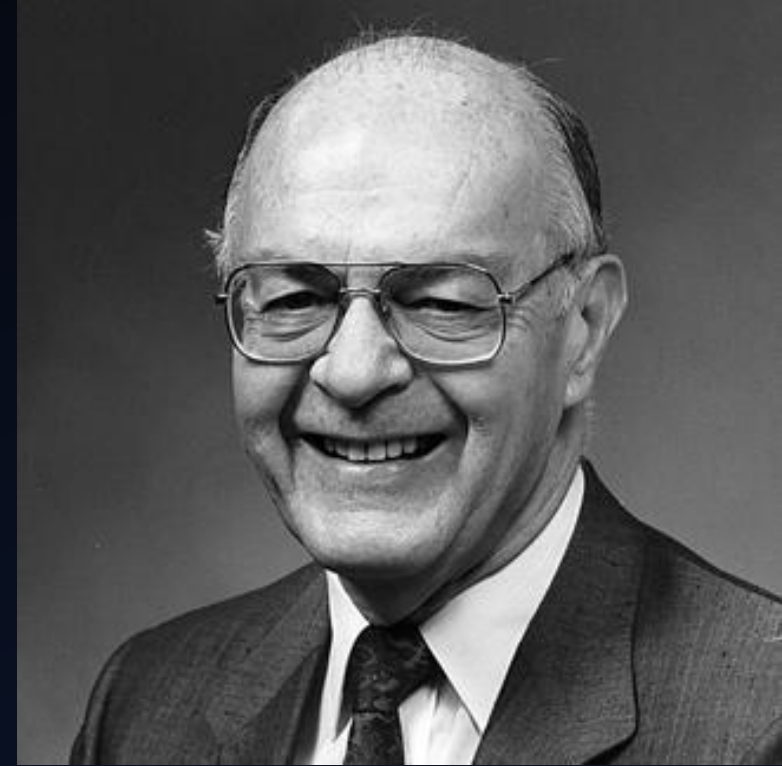
- Boring
- Impossible to attend to what is most important
- Boring

## 5. Lack of Emphasis



Howard  
Hendricks  
“Training  
teachers”

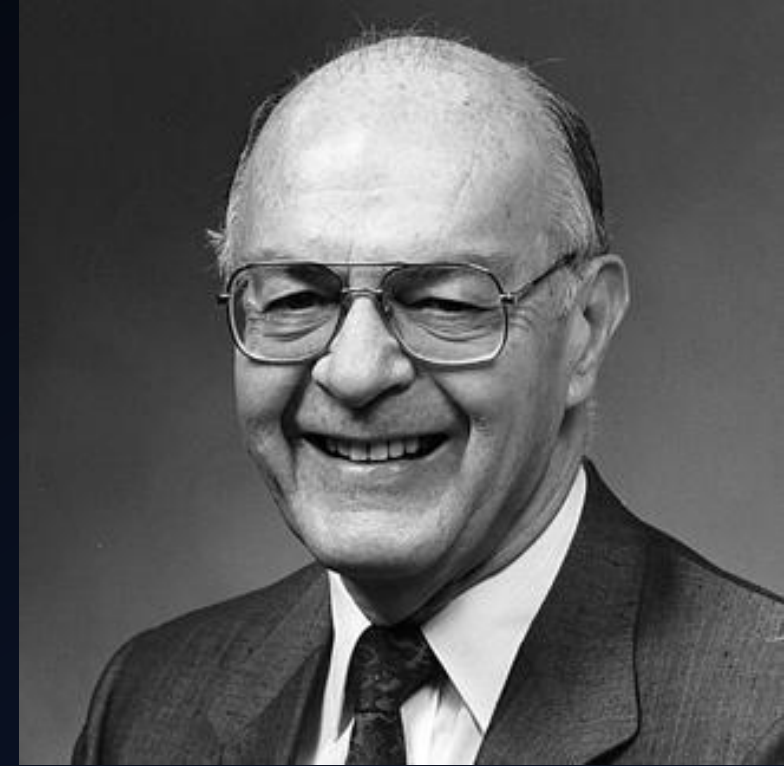
“If you are going to bore people, don’t bore them with the Bible.



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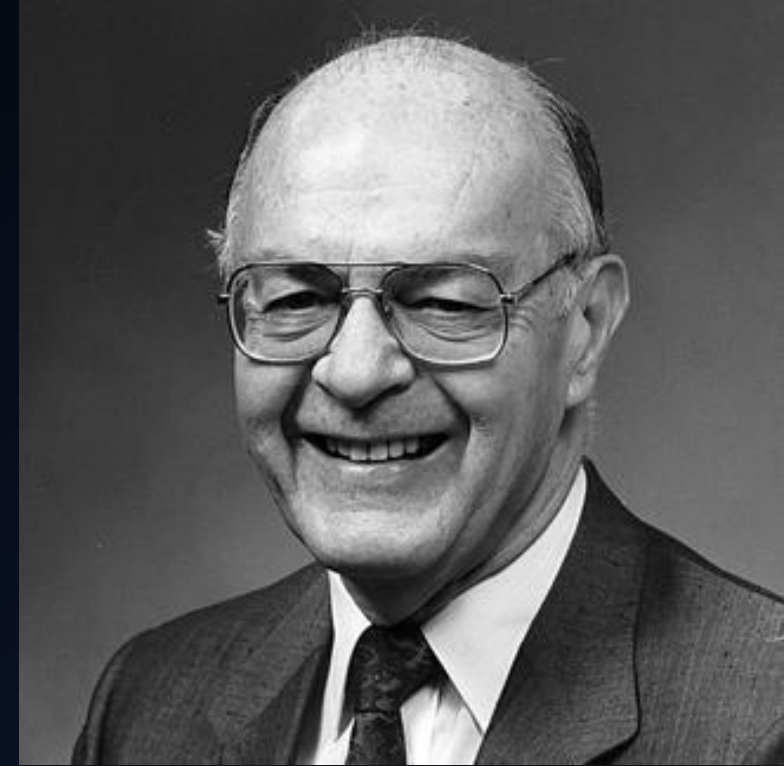


“If you are going to bore people, don’t bore them with the Bible. Bore them with calculus, bore them with earth science, bore them with world history.



Howard  
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“If you are going to bore people, don’t bore them with the Bible. Bore them with calculus, bore them with earth science, bore them with world history. But, it is a sin to bore people with the Gospel.”



Howard  
Hendricks  
“Training  
teachers”

# Overcoming

- You
  - m
  - No
- Pleading (2 Cor 5:20)
  - Shouting (Acts 14:14)
  - Weeping (Acts 20:18-19)
  - Heat (Gal 2:14)

**5. Lack of Emphasis**

# Overcoming

- Matching the emotion of scripture draws people to resonate with, remember and apply scripture

## 5. Lack of Emphasis



# John Stott

*Between Two  
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“The most privileged and moving experience a preacher can ever have is when, in the middle of the sermon, a strange hush descends upon the congregation.



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The sleepers have woken up, the coughers have stopped coughing, and the fidgeters are sitting still. No eyes or minds are wandering.



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Everybody is attending, though not to the preacher. For the preacher is forgotten, and the people are face to face with the living God, listening to his still, small voice.”



John Stott  
*Between Two Worlds*

# Modes of Emphasis

- Conversational
- Humor
- Heat
- Volume Change
- Pleading
- Inquisitive
- Rhetoric
- Shock
- Concern
- Joy

## 5. Lack of Emphasis

# Exercise: Hebrews 12:1-3

- Read the passage and think it over for a few minutes
- Read the verses and make one point with emphasis: (Heat, humor, volume change, pleading, etc.)

**5. Lack of Emphasis**



# Misc. Tips

- Be thoughtful about your audience and the language you use
- Don't go long
- Don't avoid problem passages



# Misc. Tips

- Practice story telling
- Film yourself teaching