

Book Digest

Preaching with Bold Assurance, by Hershael W. York and Bert Decker. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2003. Pp. 275. **Digest by John S. Bohannon-www.lakecountryandbeyond.com**

Format- This digest follows (in outline form) the organizational pattern presented by the authors. Chapters and subject headings have been kept in the same sequence for easy reference. The digest wording mostly consists of direct quotes of full or partial sentences (although quote marks are not given) from the text, except for occasional and minor deletions and/or additions. This process was chosen in order to condense the work while allowing the user to benefit from the actual language and specific viewpoint of the original authors. Please consult the text to confirm complete quotes. The power quotes on pages 18-20 represent complete quotes with page number references.

Introduction

- **The Challenge**- PBA challenges preachers to proclaim boldly the Word of God in a way that:
 - a. Accurately reflects the *meaning* of the text.
 - b. Challenges the *lives* of the listeners.
 - c. Engages the listeners that they might *hear* and *implement* what they have heard.
- **Presuppositions of the authors:**
 - a. Expository Model- PBA advocates an expository model of preaching (text/original authors intent drives and is the message).
 - b. Delivery (importance of) - must engage audience by the power of the preacher's conviction, passion, and warmth.
 - c. Effective exposition and communication- *both* unite to challenge a response from the contemporary audience.

Part I: The Text

Chapter One- The Privilege of Preaching

- **Preaching Is Alive And Well**
 - Preaching still remains God's primary means of ministering the Scriptures to his people.
 - Communicators lead the most successful ministries in the world.
 - Church growth is enhanced when church members invite their friends to hear the pastor.
 - Passionate preaching of *propositional truth* is the *key* to reaching people that need to hear a word from God.
- **The Great Need Of The Day**
 - The needs of the people are the same as reflected in Scripture.
 - Temptations and struggles may be expressed in a different form.
 - Christians need to hear God truth's in a way that engages their needs/sin (engaging exposition).
- **The Attendant Power Of The Holy Spirit**
 - Preachers need the power of the Holy Spirit in their proclamation.

- *Holy Spirit* power comes when the preacher:
 - a. saturates himself with the Word
 - b. surrenders himself to God's will
 - c. disciplines himself in God's way
- **The Power Of The Holy Spirit And Preparation**
 - God uses those committed to preparation, study, and hard work (anoints these type of men to save the lost and edify the saints).
 - Expect the power of the Spirit. Believe in the God-ordained potential of preaching. A preacher's commitment to his call should reflect this conviction about preaching.

Chapter Two- The Goal of Preaching

- **Filling Heads or Changing Lives**
 - Sermons should be custom built to change lives not simply impart information.
 - Sermons should aim to grip souls and motivate believers to conform to the will of God.
 - Therefore—Application is the *ultimate* goal of preaching (how and what).
- **Two Errors Of Preaching**
 1. Preaching factoid sermons (Mathew Henry miniatures). Explaining the text to a modern audience is not the same as showing its relevance for a modern audience. Preaching facts will not be sufficient to urge people to act on their knowledge. A sermon without application is dead. [Preaching biblical content without application]
 2. Overemphasis on emotional connection- making an emotional connection that is devoid of biblical truth. Mistaking emotion for the work of the spirit undermines the authority and intent of Scripture. Sound biblical content and application must accompany the emotional elements of the sermon. Emotion centered preaching may move people but will rarely change them.
 - Goal of preaching should be engaging exposition.
 - Inductive preaching—where the meaning and application is left up to the listener to decide—does not reflect the direct approach of biblical prophets.
- **Don't Try To Preach Like Jesus**
 - Jesus had intents, information, and abilities that we did not have [Ex. - John 4-woman at the well]. He employed no single methodology with parables.
 - Inductive preaching- defined as preaching that lets the listener draw his own conclusions—is not recommended. Deductive and direct in application was the almost exclusive approach of the apostles.
- **What Do You Want Out Of Your Preaching**
 - Our goal is not great sermons but to see God change the lives of our listeners by the Word.
 - Preach for a decision not merely for information.
 - Purposes of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)

- i. Informational- Teaching (1)
- ii. Applicational and exhortative- Rebuke, Correct, Train (3)

Chapter Three- The Commitments Expositors Must Make

- **A Commitment To The Truth Of The Text**
 - A high view of Scripture is imperative to expositional preaching (sine qua non of exposition) [Illus.] - Doctor prescribes medicine with the goal/belief in efficacy/healing.
- **A Commitment To The Profitability Of All Scripture**
 - Totality of God's Word- Every part of the Bible has merit and impact for today.
 - Handle the difficult and challenging texts. Preach the whole Word of God.
- **A Commitment To The Nature of Preaching**
 - Preaching is speaking the Word of God—not just building a sermon, telling stories, inspiring an audience, or giving a speech.
 - Purpose of Preaching- is to lay bare the meaning of a passage, to present its application, and show its relevance to the audience.
 - Preaching is not from within the preacher, but it emanates from the text through the preacher.
- **A Commitment To Thinking**
 - Effective preaching makes no room for a lazy mind. Requires a mental discipline of study and preparation.
 - The Thinking Process:
 - a. What the scripture means (application of hermeneutical principles)
 - b. How the passage applies (challenge of acting on truth)
 - c. How the people perceive (think about the way people think/exegete the audience) [Illus.] Golden Rule- the father packed his boy's lunch with items he liked. The goal is to communicate in a manner that the audience will best hear the message.
- **A Commitment to Reflecting Authorial Intent**
 - A preacher is never welcome to preach a meaning from a text other than the one the author had or that was shown elsewhere in Scripture that referred to that text.

Chapter Four- Approaching The Text

- Good preaching will come only through planning, preparation, and intention.
- Preaching demands the mastery of three elements: the text, the sermon, and the delivery.

- **A Suggested Approach To Exposition**
 - Expository Preaching Definition- Expository preaching is any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.
 - Expository preaching does not necessarily mean verse-by-verse, book-by-book or chapter-by-chapter. However this approach is believed to be the *best way* to acquaint people with the Bible and to equip them with a strategic grasp of

Scripture. Form can vary so long as the author's intended meaning, purpose, and application is maintained.

- **Part I: Planning To Preach (Preaching through a book)**

- Read the text many times: Use multiple/accurate translations.
- Determine the preachable units within the book or section. (unit of thought) Look for natural divisions while taking into consideration preaching time constraints. *Three criteria in determining where to begin and end a unit:*
 - a. Grammar and literary device- don't end a unit in the middle of a sentence. Don't divorce a part from the whole.
 - b. Theme- difficult to tackle two themes in one message.
 - c. Time- Work within preachable time constraints.
- Label main theme of each preaching unit. Identify the "**Big Idea**" (Robinson). Answer the question—what is the main point being made by the author?
- Organize for sermon development- create a folder for each division of the text. Begin storing ideas for outlines, illustrations, supporting material that relates to the theme of the text.
- Diagram the Passage- shows the relationships of clauses and words—between various ideas. Best translation for diagramming is *King James Version* due to its woodenly literal translation.

- **Part II Mining the Meaning (Context, Content, and Concern of the text)**

- **Distinguish the CONTEXT-** The basic unit of thought is the paragraph. To understand the meaning of words, you must have sufficient context to insure that you have the intended meaning of those words in their context. An expositor limits himself to authorial intent, which is derived from context. *Three kinds of context:*
 1. Historical Context- What is happening historically in the passage? (geographically, background events/factors that contribute to the meaning, cultural details, false religions)
 2. Textual Context- Each Bible verse is related to the verses around it. *Two aspects:*
 - a. **Progressive Revelation-** the whole Bible was not given at one time—preachers must guard against attributing greater understanding of a subject to a particular author than he himself revealed. It is important to understand the place of the text in the grand sweep of God's revelation in the word.
 - b. **Specific Book-**Each passage has a particular function in the specific book of the Bible in which it is located. Taken out of its context can make the text

appear to mean something other than what the author intended. Additionally each book holds a special relation to the rest of the Bible.

3. Literary Context-The form of writing affects our understanding of its meaning (poetry vs. narrative, hymns, parables etc.). Form describes distinct types of writing within any one book. Genre, which is the category of literature to which the book itself belongs, is also important (history, epistle, gospel, apocalyptic, and wisdom).

- Determine the CONTENT - *Three ways to analyze the text to discern content:*

1. Structural Analysis-books of the Bible are written in a logical order that develops a particular argument, narrative, theme, instruction, or any combination of these categories. Tracing this development helps to understand both the individual passage as well as the entire book. *Microstructure*-examines grammar and syntax (subject, verb, object) of individual sentences. *Macrostructure*- examines sentences, paragraphs, and divisions together.

2. Thematic Analysis- most biblical authors take up one theme or topic at a time. Look for *conventions of compositions*, which are words or phrases that are used to signal a change in topic or a progression from a prior thought to one that results from it. [Ex.] - “Now,” “Therefore,” “Wherefore.” Repetition and variation will often point to the key topic or subject. Additionally, look for literary conventions to help discover themes such as, inclusio and chiasms. Last, look for any theological conventions by asking the question: what does this passage say about God?

3. Lexical Analysis- understanding the meaning of words. A helpful list of study resources is provided on pages 76-77. D.A. Carson’s *Exegetical Fallacies* provides critical instruction to guard against finding erroneous meanings in words that the author never intended.

- Discern the CONCERN- determine how the passage applies to the hearers.

- a. The author’s intent should guide application. Seek to address the sermon to the kind of situation addressed in the text. Questions to ask: What situation was the author addressing? Why did he want them to know this? What encouragement was he offering? What correction was he administering? What sin was he confronting? If the listeners really believed what he wrote, what changes would they be compelled to make?
- b. Contemporary Meaning- move from the author’s own application to one that fits our contemporary audience. Usually the application is the same but at times this will require building a bridge between cultures. The author recommends Robinson’s “ladder of abstraction” as a guide to finding the proper application for contemporary listeners when the author’s application is culturally distant.

Chapter Five- Moving Toward The Sermon

- Thematic Outline- the first step is to build a thematic outline by reducing the text to an outline form. Seek the basic meaning of the text. This outline serves as a way of being certain that we understand the meaning of the text. Caution- Don't merely preach a descriptive outline, which is nothing but "dry commentary." This descriptive outline is not the message or end in itself.

Part II: The Sermon

Chapter 6- Building a Sermon with The Decker Grid System

- **Types of Communicators Not To Emulate**
 - a. Boring- may be well researched and even clear yet his communication approach causes you to lose interest.
 - b. LBOWS or Lovely Bunch of Words- Typified by bluster and braggadocio—airing personal opinions—a lot of words yet little truth.
 - c. Rambling- May have a point—but takes too long getting there. You lose interest and wonder if the trip was worth it.
 - d. Pointless- A rambler who has no point at all. The trip was worthless!
- **It's Not Print**
 - Conveying information use print. Creating action, speak. The aim is to combine your conviction and arresting content with energetic and authentic delivery.
- **Summarize the Subject**
 - a. Discover the point of the text (main theme or subject) and, therefore, my point. What am I trying to accomplish with this sermon? The best place to locate the author's intent/emphasis is always the *verbs*. Among many subjects—seek to identify the one that expresses the main thrust of the passage.
 - b. Discover who your audience is? Understanding the hearers. Where are they coming from? How much do they know about the subject? Are they for it or against it? Know your audience.
 - c. Decide what you want them to do as a result of the message. The goal is not merely cognitive, but behavioral. Action and changed lives. Look for command forms in the text to use. Give specific action steps.
 - d. Decide what the benefit is for the audience. What's in it for them? What would be 1-3 benefits for the audience if they were to buy into the message and implement the action steps?
- **The Decker Grid System**

The Decker system is an organizational tool for developing clear messages. This tool forces listener-based messages, encourages spontaneity and human touch in your content. It enables you to organize ideas quickly and think in a new way. Plus it cuts down preparation time in half. It is a system based on the way the mind works—quickly and spontaneously. It consists of *three basic concepts or tools*:

1. Trigger words- key words are used as building blocks that prompt the working knowledge in your mind when speaking—versus writing out sentences. A trigger word is the shortest word, group of words, or symbol about which you could talk for thirty seconds to five minutes.

2. Grid message folders- folders to store/collect information for your message.

3. Post-it notes- Trigger words are placed on these notes. Allows you to shuffle ideas, sort and discard them as necessary.

Decker Grid System- Four Part Process:

1. Cornerstones- create the context for the message, identify purpose, and lay foundation. Focus on the listener's perspective—what you want them to do/benefits.

Building Cornerstones:

- a. Identify main theme/subject.
- b. Write down you POV (point of view). Active verb to define your passion.
- c. Describe the audience.
- d. List action steps for the audience. Demands/responses from the audience.
- e. Identify 3 benefits for the audience—if they implement the actions steps.

2. Create- Generate ideas in support of your subject.

- Goal- to capture as many ideas as possible (brainstorming)(facts, figures, stories, examples) that relate to your text and subject.
- Place the idea on a sticky-note using one or two trigger words.

3. Cluster- group ideas according to common themes.

- Purpose of this step is to organize and edit ideas from the create step.
- Begin by determining how many logical points come from the text.
- Write out these points in an applicational way—action-oriented versus descriptive.
- Then group ideas together that are similar around the key thematic points.

4. Compose- organize and edit clusters.

- Rule of 3- keep sub points to three per key point. Suggestion- one sub-point should be explanation—one illustration—one discretionary. Application is in the key point itself.

5. Added Step- Opening and Closing- Begin with story or quote—state your point of view—one action step—and second best benefit—then share the rest of the grid. End by restating your point of view, action step, and use your best benefit, and add another story/quote (SHARP).

Chapter 7- Building Sermons to Change Lives

- **3 Part Communication Process in Preaching**

1. God is the ultimate source of revelation. [God → signal → Biblical authors]
2. “Men of God” became sources of God’s revelation. They sent a written signal via books of the Bible, which readers decode to discover the meaning.
[Biblical authors → signal → Readers]
3. Preachers shift from receptors who read and decode to being sources who convey meaning to our receptors—the audience. [Preacher → signal → Listener]

Goal- Preach so that listeners here and perceive the same message that God originally gave. To the degree that we faithfully preach the text, we speak God’s word. A preacher’s responsibility is to communicate God’s truth in a way that the receptor’s “get it (perceptual element).” Question to ask: *how can I say this so they really understand and act on it?*

- **Discover the Proposition**

- Each sermon should have one *core proposition* (a main point stated in an applicational way). Everything in the sermon should relate to this proposition!
- Build application into the proposition—allow application to drive the sermon.
- Example: Wrong approach- God expects his children to be holy.
Right approach- Every Christian should strive for personal holiness.

- **Develop The Main Content Points**

- Identify discernible divisions/truths within the text (relating to the central theme). Questions to ask: what is the main truth being presented in that section and what is the proper response to it? Discover the meaning and the implications of that meaning.
- State these divisional points in an applicational manner versus a descriptive outline (“The Problem”, “The Process,” The Promise”). A descriptive method fails to build the bridge to your listeners. The real point of the sermon is always application. *Reasons not to save application until the conclusion:*
 - a. Afterthought versus main point of message.
 - b. Difficult to conclude effectively when for the first time you are making sure people understand the implications of the text.
 - c. Time constraints- if you run out of time when arriving to the conclusion—and this is where you have the application—it will get left out or be extemporaneously edited.
- Make your outlines (divisions) have content and interpretive impact, not merely structural value (applicational vs. descriptive approach).
- Outline Purpose- get the message of the text across not provide a structure to your sermon.

- **Develop The Transitional Sentence**

- Take textual development (divisions) and shows its relevance to the congregation and how it relates back to the main theme/proposition.
- Use a plural key word that reflects the proposition and anticipates the main points of the sermon.
- **Fill In The Main Points**
 - Begin with application because this is the form of the main point (divisions). then move to explanation, illustration, and conclude by restating the application.
 - Main Point 1 (Application) → Explanation → Illustration → Application (restated) → Main Point 2
- **Choose The Main Point Illustrations**
 - Goal- one illustration per main point (division). Think perceptually—how will your congregation hear the illustration?
- **Develop Specific Applications**
 - A secret to powerful preaching.
 - Make sure applications arise legitimately from the text.
 - Don't use application as an excuse for personal venting.
- **Write Transitions Between Main Points**
 - Important to develop intentional/planned transitions between each point. Connects points and aids in helping the listener follow the development of the sermon.
 - Recap the previous point and propel forward to the next point. [hitch between boxcars of a train]
- **Develop The Conclusion and the Introduction**
 - Develop conclusion and introduction after the body of the sermon is completed. Key elements to getting the people involved in the text and to change lives as a result.
- **Reduce The Sermons To Outline Form**
 - Manuscript form vs. an outline form left to personal preference.
 - Delivery- reduce notes to a minimum so as to prevent ignoring the audience yet detailed enough to help you remember your points.
 - Don't read your sermon! No Manuscripts!

Chapter 8- Illustrating the Sermon

- People will remember illustrations far better than main points.
- Goal-strike a balance between content and emotion, between head and heart.
- Illustrations shed light on the text—making meaning plain, connects emotionally with the hearers, allows time for digesting the truth, and provides a hook for remembering and applying the truths of the sermon.
- **The Jesus Method**

- Jesus directed His speech to the hearts of others—connecting on an emotional level, not primarily a cerebral level.
 - Used stories and parables to relate to common people—causing them to wrestle with the truth.
 - Connection, Not Emotionalism- mere emotion was never the goal of Jesus—yet He was willing to use emotion as a vehicle for His truth.
 - Messages should be filled with images, emotional impact, stories and parables—that drive home the content of the message.
- **The Placement of Illustrations**
 - The introduction and conclusion are the *most important* places for illustrations (arouse interest and drive home the message).
- **The SHARP Principles**- An acronym representing five methods for emotional connection with the audience.
 - a. Story- One that relates to the people—is interesting, engaging, entertaining, and relates to the point you are making. Bring people to the “aha” of recognition and identification.
 - b. Humor- Helps create a special bond with people. Makes message more enjoyable to listen to—and memorable. Warning: don’t tell jokes. The aim is not comedy but connection.
 - c. Analogies- a one line illustration that fixes an image in the minds of the audience, which illuminates the truth for clearer comprehension.
 - d. References- Appeal to commonly accepted knowledge or lend support to your point of view by appealing to the authority or wisdom of others. The aim is not to impress but to impact.
 - e. Pictures- Give the audience something to look at when possible (striking graphic aids, props, overheads, computer presentations, etc.). Do it with excellence!
- **Hints For Great Illustrations**
 - Use only illustrations that relate to your text. Don’t settle for a good story instead of a relevant story.
 - Use illustrations relevant to your culture.
 - Make illustrations vivid. The more focused—more details of a story—the more you pull the audience in, creating “involuntary listening” and drawing them into the story—thus aiding application and meaning.
 - Make them personal- people connect to real life examples. Warning: Don’t be too personal; avoid talking about sin or weakness in your life that is unresolved; and ask permission to use family examples. Let sanctified common sense guide you.
 - Look for illustrations everywhere. Become a human vacuum cleaner, sucking up interesting stories and tidbits as you go through life. Don’t use movies or television that you cannot recommend. Memorize poems. Present statistics visually.

Chapter 9- Introducing the Sermon

- Listeners decide within the first few minutes whether or not the preacher is credible and whether or not they will allow his information in. The introduction is a *critical* place to connect with the audience.
- **Establish A Rapport**
 - The first moments of the sermon will either close the door to your message or swing it wide open. Make sure our behavior relates to our message and that our expressions, posture, and body language is appropriate.
 - Guard against behavior that may cause the listener to question the reliability of the message
 - Two common mistakes: (1) Apologies (leading into the message and (2) Homiletical Travelogue (how you got to this message).
- **Introduce The Subject**
 - Aim is to set up the subject and let the audience know where the message is going. The audience shouldn't be asking-"Where is he going with this?"
- **Create Interest**
 - Audience is asking, "*Why do I need to know this and what good is this going to do me?*"
 - Aim is to draw them into the sermon.
 - Involuntary Listening- what takes place when a person cannot help themselves and has to tune in and listen. There are nine techniques that can help accomplish involuntary listening:
 1. Novelty- something new and different. Not always the same pattern.
 2. Movement- movement draws focus and attention.
 3. Proximity- things near to us draw attention (physically, emotionally).
 4. Concreteness- Vivid and concrete details vs. abstract and general.
 5. Familiarity- Awaken a sense of common knowledge and interest.
 6. Suspense- drawn in when a few pieces of the puzzle remain missing.
 7. Intensity- people pay attention to passionate energy/intense emotion.
 8. Humor- Self-deprecation is the safest form of humor.
 9. Life relatedness- things people readily identify with creates interest.
- **Set Up And Read The Text**
 - Regardless of how, make sure you publicly read the text aloud (1 Tim. 4:13).
 - The placement of the text should be a function of your development of the sermon. Mix up the placement from time to time.
 - Help the people locate the text biblically. Help them understand what they need to know outside of the immediate context of the passage. Be brief with scriptural background yet sufficient enough for understanding the text being preached.
- **State The Proposition**
 - Proposition is the core truth or central idea of the text. This is best placed at the end of the introduction. It serves as the Homiletical compass (true north-by which all else is measured).
- **Transition Into The Body Of The Sermon**
 - Good transitions are the difference between a good sermon and a great one.

Chapter 10- Concluding the Sermon

- People remember last words!
 - Restate the most important themes/ask yourself the question, what is the thing you most want them to remember?
 - Greatest error-preachers make is in their *conclusion*—or lack thereof.
 - A sermon that does not tell people how to apply the truth and respond to it will only frustrate them.
 - Conclusions should be planned *after* the body of the sermon is finished.
- **Summarize The Main Subject**
 - Summarize the proposition and the main points of the sermon.
 - Conclusion is the sermon in microcosm.
 - A closing illustration can encapsulate the whole sermon that enables the hearers to comprehend and keep the message.
- **Focus On Long-Range Application**
 - Goal of preaching is a change in behavior—doing the truth not just knowing it. A preacher's responsibility is to urge on the listener the changes in their behavior that the text demands.
 - Long-Range- share with people how their lives must change; Short-Range- tells them how they can respond right now through the invitation or in prayer.
 - Long-Range- expressed throughout the sermon but specifically in the conclusion. Help the listener see what their lives must look like if they obey the text. Be specific. Specificity and detail are more powerful than broad generalities.
- **Ask For Immediate Response**
 - Invitations are *implicitly* bound with our preaching.
 - Give invitations that directly relate to the sermon preached.
 - Provide opportunities for others to respond in different ways other than the sermon.
 - A public response often helps people seal their inward response with an outward action.
- **Set A Hook**
 - Use your best illustration at the end (conclusion).
 - Goal- is to help listeners visualize themselves acting on the truth presented and changing their lives to reflect that understanding.
 - Allow at least 5 minutes for the conclusion.
 - Draw the net through illustration, summarization, and appeal.

Part III- Delivery

Chapter 11- Building Trust in the Messenger

- **Trust Is The Key**
 - Trust is the most critical element in communication.
 - Expression, demeanor, posture, tone, and attitude must demonstrate that we are sincere and trustworthy.
- **The Importance Of Behavior**
 - Nine behavioral skills that impact communication and thus our sermons: Eye Communication, Gestures and Facial Expression, Posture and Movement, Dress and Appearance, Voice and Vocal Variety, Words and Fillers, Humor, Listener Involvement, The Natural Self.
 - People won't hear the message if our behavior gets in the way.
- **Sending A Mixed Message**
 - It is imperative that the preacher's actions match his words.
 - If the preacher's demeanor/actions match his content then the audience is free to more carefully listen to the message and judge rationally.
 - If vocal and visual components of our message are inconsistent with the verbal content—the message will not be believed.
 - Professor Albert Mehrabian- UCLA Study- If speaker's send out an inconsistent message, their verbal content is virtually smothered by the vocal and visual components. Believability: Verbal→ 7% Vocal→ 38% Visual →55% = 100%
- **Making It Work**
 - Do you want your audience to believe your message? Then first you must get them to believe you.

Chapter 12- The Victory of the Visual

- Good communicators understand that the audience gets what they see.
- WYSIWYG- What You See Is What You Get.
- **God's Glorious Design**
 - Visual input makes the greatest impact of all the sensory input the brain registers.
 - Visual sense dominates all of the senses.
- **Be Careful Little Eyes What You See**
 - Viewing something three times has the power of one actual experience.
 - The power of vision is real. Decide to use it appropriately and effectively for presenting truth/sermon.
- **Getting Past The Gatekeeper**
 - Gatekeeper (or first brain) - fictional element in one's mind that discerns over the messenger and decides whether or not to allow the information to pass into the intellect.
 - Best Communicator- person who knows how to befriend the gatekeeper, who knows how to become "first brain-friendly," so that the message gets through effectively and persuasively.

- **First Brains First**
 - 2 parts to the brain- * Cerebral Cortex (analytical brain) & * First Brain (emotional brain [limbic system] & unconscious/immediate response system [brain stem]).
 - *All* sensory input—especially stimulus of seeing and hearing—goes first into the first brain area before later being analyzed by the thinking brain.
 - First brain is the *nonrational gatekeeper* that subconsciously takes in the visual and auditory cues and clues and decides whether to accept the information first, and then how to accept it.
 - First-Brain language is mostly *visual* language.
- **The Most Common Mistake**
 - Targeting only the rational part of the brain and ignoring the *first brain* (emotional part). To reach the rational part of the brain, the message must first pass through the *first brain*.
- **The Issues Of Life**
 - Effective Communication must involve making emotional (first-brain) contact with listeners.
 - Decisions are overwhelmingly influenced at the emotional level (the preconscious level).
 - To reach the intellect you must first go through the heart (emotions/first-brain).
 - Aim- appear credible, excited, energetic, and believable—then our words will have more impact before they are switched to the rational part of the brain.
 - If you appear boring, anxious, insincere—our words will not make it to the rational thinking part of the brain (tuned out).
- **Use Or Abuse?**
 - Above principles are not good or bad—they just are! They are descriptive and cognizant of how God made us. Use this knowledge for God’s glory knowing the high standard of judgment for teachers (James 3:1).
- **Do We Sell The Gospel?**
 - Takes the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God to save a person.
 - People don’t accept the gospel based on the sophistication of the presentation but they will not even *hear* the gospel if they do not find us credible.
- **First Brain-Friendly**
 - Key to making friends with the first-brain (gatekeeper) - by being natural, authentic—freed up from inhibition—be yourself. Be looser and more spontaneous. Naturally use your energy, enthusiasm, motion—nonverbal cues that God gave us to make emotional contact.

Chapter 13- The Essence of Energy

- Enthusiasm and passion of a speaker is contagious. Energy engages the first-brain in communication and swings the gate wide open.
- People listen to those who are energetic and in love with their subject.

- **Divine Power And Human Means**
 - Don't share in God's glory.
 - Yet, as we improve in communicating the more people will hear and see God. Therefore we should do and use all at our disposal to become better communicators of His truth.
 - Energy, passion, conviction—these are the essential ingredients of Christian Communication.

- **The Affect-Meter**
 - Affect- a term that describes the “feelings” side of our human makeup—our emotions, moods, and temperament. Young children (1-2yrs.) are typically at full affect (maximum emotional energy)—yet as people age they swing toward a low energy/affect. This is caused by pressures to conform, to fit in, to be correct, etc. These forces push us into a deep pit of minimal emotional energy (which is critical to effective communication).

- **Fully Expressive Communication**
 - Effective communicators- are individuals who learn how to be expressive—yet fully in control. Rediscover the affective state of a two-year-old, yet govern that expressiveness with the conscious control of a mature adult.

- **The “Forward Lean” Of Life**
 - Ready position- standing with your weight forward and knees slightly bent so you can bounce on the balls of your feet—expresses a sense of excitement, interest, and eagerness to share your message.

- **Sameness Is The Enemy**
 - Messages preached with a mundane and routine tone will be ignored. People are drawn to energy, the break in the sameness. Exhibit your passion and energy so that you can move past the first-brain getting your listeners to really see and hear what you have to say.

Chapter 14- The Behavioral Skills

- Effective communication is a balance between delivery and content, style and substance.

- **A Word Worthy Of Work**
 - The Bible speaks to the importance of communication. Common theme in passages, which deal with communication, is power—complete confidence in God's power.
 - Example- Corinthians believed Paul because their faith rested on the demonstration of God's power conveyed through Paul's demeanor (1Cor.2:4-5). This demonstration of power related to both content and communication of the message. If the communication of the message was not important—then there would be no need of anything but written communication.

- Commitment to improve communicating God's Word requires no less commitment than preparing the content/message from the Word.
 - **The Paradox Of Preaching**
 - The better you are, the less people notice you.
 - **The Nine Communication Skills** (1-4 transform our visual impact; 5-9 are energy skills)
 - More in depth look at communication skills that are the basis for good delivery and style.
1. **Eye Communication**- *Objective:* To look at another person steadily and confidently.
 - Eye contact is the primary skill for gaining credibility.
 - Common Problems- Eye dart (flitting eyes), Greener-grass gaze (always looking past the person they are talking to), Prayer eyes (closes eyes/tilts head back).
 - Suggestions- Use involvement rather than intimidation or intimacy by connecting eyes for at least 5 seconds; eliminate eye dart and slo-blink; observe yourself on video; practice in one-on-one situations.
 2. **Gestures and Facial Expressions**- *Objective:* To be relaxed and natural—open and energetic.
 - To communicate successfully, you must be enthused, excited, and speak with conviction and passion.
 - Opened arm gesture and a warm, open smile is welcoming.
 - Suggestions- preach from a convicting passion; avoid wooden gestures; identify your nervous gesture and work on removing it (video); keep hands at your sides when not “in use”; be willing to express yourself freely; smile.
 3. **Posture and Movement**- *Objective:* To Stand Tall and Move with an Ease and Confidence.
 - Physical position reflects your mental readiness.
 - Suggestions- observe others who exert powerful movement (Adrian Rogers); realize slouching hurts credibility; practice good posture; stand tall; keep a “forward lean” mindset; move around; video to observe posture and movement.
 4. **Dress and Appearance**- *Objective:* To Be Appropriate to Your Environment in Dress and Grooming.
 - Appearance determines the immediate receptivity of our audience. Our dress should be consistent with our message.
 - Suggestions- Wear the right clothes for the right audience/cultural context; Be appropriate by knowing your audience (seek to fit in); Tips: dress and groom up, not down, button your jacket when standing, dress and groom at a conscious level, conservative dress is better for a spiritual message; get feedback from others; observe the dress of others.
 5. **Voice and Vocal Variety**- *Objective:* To Use Your Voice as a Rich, Resonant Instrument.
 - Suggestions- record yourself; make your voice naturally authoritative by working at lowering your voice; use the full range of your voice; use an expressive telephone voice; put a smile in your voice; listen to your voice mails for feedback.

6. **Words and Fillers**- *Objective: To Use Words Well, and to Use The Power of the Pause.*
 - Avoid fill words (words and nonwords that have no real meaning/ “uhm”, “and”, “you know”, “whatever”).
 - Suggestions- watch professionals (see how they use the pause); build your vocabulary; paint word pictures; beware of jargon that some won’t understand; replace nonwords with the power of the pause.

7. **Humor**- *Objective: To Use Humor to Create a Bond with Your Listeners.*
 - Humor makes you appear more genial, warmer, and more likable.
 - Goal- make the formal informal.
 - Suggestions- Don’t tell jokes; find the form of humor that works for you; Think funny, use humor in language; think friendly; keep a humor notebook.

8. **Listener Involvement**- *Objective: To Maintain Interest and Involvement of Each Person to Whom You are Communicating.*
 - Goal- is to involve the listener and move him or her to action.
 - Suggestions- Use contrast; Dramatic volume; Use another medium (Ex. Fill in a blank outline); Use drama; Maintain eye communication; Move around; Use visuals; Ask questions; Use demonstrations; Use samples and gimmicks; Keep your own interest level high.

9. **The Natural Self**- *Objective: To Be Authentic, Learning New Skills so They Become Natural.*
 - Discover your weakness and then learn new skills to overcome them. Be intentional about moving from the stage of unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence.
 - Suggestions- Work on developing some new communication habits; change bad habits by working on one a day or one a week; remember that communicating well is a lifetime process.

Conclusion

- Learn from this work yet develop your own style. However, do not deviate from giving them the meaning and challenging them with the application of the Scripture.
- Never forget your complete dependence is on God.
- Guard yourself against operating in the realm of talent and not the Spirit.
- Never forget the privilege of speaking for God—this responsibility demands and deserves our best!

Power (*imperium*) Quotes

(Top 10 in bold & Top 3 numbered)

- Poor preparation (exposition & delivery) - **“stunted pastors preach small sermons to spiritual pygmies—and they don’t even do it well.”** (ix)

- Propositional Truth- (context-dealing with boring unengaging services) ***“The solution is not, as some have suggested, to turn worship services into entertainment—or even infotainment; the answer lies in passionate preaching of propositional truth.”*** (5)
 - Holy Spirit- *“Although we cannot take credit for the power of the Holy Spirit, we can usually take the blame for His absence.”* (8) *“The more a man of God gives himself to this sacred task (preaching)—the more committed he is to an accurate exposition of the text and a passionate presentation of the sermon—the more frequently and dynamically the Holy Spirit seems to work through him.”* (8)
 - Application- *“Application is what makes the Bible come alive and makes sermons practical.”* (11)
 - Emotion vs. Explanation- ***“If some preachers choke their people to death on spiritual meat, other preachers starve their congregations on spiritual cotton candy.”*** (14)
 - Confrontational Preaching- *“The prophets often got in the faces of their listeners and seldom left them to wonder about how to apply what they were saying.”* (15)
 - Example to the Body- *“the way you handle the Word in the pulpit is the way your people will handle the Word in their lives.”* (20).
 - Purpose of Preaching- *“The Purpose of preaching is to lay bare the meaning of a passage, to present its application, and show its relevance to the audience.”* (22)
 - Authorial Intent/ Stream Analogy- ***“Picture biblical truth like a mighty stream. It is moving one direction, and in the middle of the stream runs a channel in which the water runs swiftest and deepest. When we preach the text with the same intent as the author, even addressing the same kind of problem or audience as the biblical writer did, we preach with the force and depth of the main channel. Our sermons have maximum flow. But if we take a verse out of its context, we find ourselves standing in the water, as we are within the scope of biblical revelation. But we are in shallow water and do not experience the natural force of the text.”*** (#1)
- “The preacher will experience the greatest anointing of the Holy Spirit and the greatest effectiveness possible when he places himself squarely within the confines of the biblical author’s intent.”* (29)
- Expository Preaching Definition- *“Expository preaching is any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.”* (33)
 - Time Constraints- *“Too little time in a passage betrays the wealth of Scripture, while too much time ignores the totality of Scripture.”* (37)
 - Context- *“Divorced from context, the words of the Bible can be—and unfortunately often are—twisted and perverted to justify all kinds of evil.”* (53)
 - Content Matters- *“No matter how great a communicator one may be, if the content of the sermon is not congruent with the Word of God, it cannot and will not achieve anything of eternal value.”* (77)

- Authorial Intent with Application- *“When we preach the text and address our sermon to the same kind of problem that the author intended, we find ourselves in the main channel of the river, carried along by the strongest flow possible.”* (78)
- Simple Truth- *“The basic message of the Scriptures is not hidden or secret, and you don’t need a Ph.D in Greek to understand it—or even to preach it!”* (82)
- Descriptive Outline/non- *“We must get the meaning of the text before all else, but if that were all preaching required, we would probably be better off buying commentaries for our church members.”* (92)
- Preaching Goal- *“Remember that our goal is never merely cognitive, but behavioral. We want nothing less than changed lives.”* (110)
- Purposeful Preaching- *“Just remember that no text is purely academic. Every passage in the Bible has a purpose. Find that purpose and preach it.”* (139)
- Applicational Divisions- *“Applicational points in which you show the mandate of the text and its claim on our lives awaken people to their own need for conformity to the image of Christ. When you preach applicational points, the devil can’t agree and the backslidden (or lost) can’t stay comfortable.”* (#2) (142)
- Application (Void) - *“Exegesis divorced from application produces Christians with big heads and no heart.”* (143)
- Emotionalism- *“Jesus never resorted to emotionalism—making mere emotion the goal—but on the other hand he certainly wasn’t afraid of using emotions as a vehicle for his truth.”* (152).
- Analogy- *“An analogy is a one-line illustration, a porthole of light illuminating your message and pegging it to your listener’s memory.”* (161)
- Illustrations- *“Vivid language is a secret to powerful stories, illustrations, and even preaching. Word pictures, vibrant description, and strong action verbs are the life blood of engaging preaching.”* (165)
- Rapport- *“No one will give an honest and thoughtful hearing to a message that is incongruent with everything else he sees in your expression, posture, and body language.”* (176)
- Transitions- *“Good transitions are the difference between a good sermon and a great one.”* (182)
- Conclusion- *“The conclusion is the funnel into which all the other elements of the sermon are poured and emerge in a single, unified stream.”* (185)
- Congregation Response- *“We don’t just want them to know the truth; we want them to do the truth.”* (188)

- Application- *“When a preacher starts getting specific with application, so long as he does not claim that this is the only application, people catch on and personalize and contextualize it for themselves.”* (190)
- Invitation- *“But by all means, keep in mind that when people hear the word preached, they often feel the need to seal their inward response with an outward action.”*(191)
- Conclusion- *“When we fail to draw the net and challenge listeners to commit to obedience, we fail in our calling.”* (193)
- Delivery/Trust- *“In fact, your audience, whether it be of one or one thousand, rarely hears your message if something in your behavior makes them think, even on a subconscious level, that you are not trustworthy.”* (199)
- Behavior- *“No matter how skillful our words, how profound our truth, how artistic our presentation, we must never forget that we are the message. People won’t hear us if our behavior gets in the way.”* (200).
- Communication- *“Failure to communicate cannot be redeemed by brilliance, intelligence, sincerity, or even truth. No matter how great one’s message, it cannot change those it does not reach.”* (215)
- Communication- *“Remember: the better we are at communicating, the less people notice us and the more they see God.”* (215)
- Delivery- *“People are moved by men and women who feel their message is worth the risk of death. That really is a demonstration of power!”* (223).
- Delivery- *“Answers the question, why learn how to communicate better? “The better you are, the less people notice you. The greater your ability to present God’s Word, the less you get in the way and the freer your listeners are to hear the message and to respond personally.”* (224).
- Flesh Preaching- *“God help you if you let a system—even our system—lead you away from his heart and into a coldly efficient, powerless preaching that people mistake for the anointed blessing of the Holy Spirit.”*(#3) (261)