

Manuscripting and Practicing (Step 7)

I. Why Manuscript Your Sermons? (Adapted from Robinson, 175-79; Stott, 254-58)

Writing the message down word-for-word improves your preaching in several ways:

- A. It forces you to choose not just *any* word to convey your message, but the *best* word (Eccles. 12:9-10). It obligates you to think straight in advance rather than use the same old clichés.
- B. Realism: Very few of us are good extemporaneous speakers who can find just the right words at the right times without prior written preparation.
- C. Review: Manuscripting enables you to use the sermon years later without losing the content of your original message. (The abbreviations in brief notes are soon forgotten.)
- D. Manuscripting helps you to see how long your sermon will take so you can stick to your time limit.
- E. The bottom line is that manuscripting helps you be a more interesting speaker.

II. How Do You Manuscript Your Sermon?

Hopefully these hints will help:

- A. One option is to manuscript in *prose*, indenting new paragraphs as you would a research paper. On the side column a summary word or words clarify the place each paragraph takes in the overall outline. See pages 82-85 for an example and an explanation on page 81.
- B. An alternative I use is a manuscript in *outline* form. Each point has full sentences, verses underlined are to be read, and words not read to the congregation appear in brackets []. See pages 86-90, 148-50 for a sample and an explanation on page 81.
- C. Whichever option you use above, make sure your style (choice of words) has these three characteristics (Robinson, 179-89):

1. Clear: No matter how deep the truth, you don't *know* it until you can *explain* it!

- a. *Clear outline*: clarity at the manuscript level starts with clarity in the "big picture"
- b. *Short sentences*: not more than 17-18 words (cf. p. 106)
- c. *Simple sentence structure*:

1) Write in this sequence: main subject, main verb, then (where needed) main object.

2) Package only one thought per sentence.

3) Concentrate on independent clauses. An example of how *not* to write can be found in Lewis Sperry Chafer's *Systematic Theology*:

As has been intimated, it is noticeable that the great majority of the works on Systematic Theology have been satisfied to trace the origin of sin no further than to the fall of man in Eden. It is true that human sin began in Eden, but, though Adam merely re-enacted that sin which before him had been committed in heaven, the essential character of sin is to be determined, to a large measure, by the sin of the first angel rather than by its reproduction by the first man.

4) Now *you* write what Chafer wrote but use simpler terms:

d. *Simple words*: Speak to inform—not to impress.

- 1) *Avoid “specialized vocabulary”* (jargon) understood only by the theologically literate (e.g., eschatology, angst, pneumatology, exegesis, existential, Johannine, Petrine, superlapsarian, amillennial). See Stott’s example on his page 232.
- 2) *Prefer the short word* over the long one. Seventy-three percent of the words in Psalm 23, 76 percent of the words in the Lord’s Prayer, and 80 percent of the words in 1 Corinthians 13 are one-syllable words.
- 3) *Use words people already know*. No one will complain if your sermon didn’t expand his vocabulary.

Rule of Thumb: Don’t overestimate the people’s vocabulary
or underestimate their intelligence

2. Direct and Personal:

- a) Remember that you are speaking to a specific group in a specific place at a specific time.
- b) Use *direct address*: Don’t say, “The Christian should give of his money...” but say, “*You* should give of your money...” or even better: “Give your money...”
- c) Use *questions to advance the flow of thought*. For example, say, “So how does this apply? Look at verses 3-5 which tell us that we should...”
- d) Use *contractions and split infinitives* in speaking even though you wouldn’t in writing.
- e) Use *slang* directly—not thoughtlessly.

3. Vivid

- a) Appeal to the senses of sight and sound.
- b) Use specific, concrete details. “Specific” means explicit and exact while “concrete” means it paints a picture on the mind.
- c) Think in pictures to visualize details for your listeners.
- d) Prefer good nouns and verbs over adjectives and adverbs: say “giant” not “tall man,” say “he bellowed” not “he talked loudly,” say it was “scalding” not “very hot.”
- e) Write in the active, not passive voice (“The dog pursued the man” not “The man was being pursued by the dog”). The principle: “somebody does something.”
- f) Employ fresh figures of speech. Similes and metaphors pack more in a phrase than do volumes.

D. How can you be an interesting speaker (Robinson, 189)?

1. Pay attention to your *own* use of language. In private conversation force yourself to use concrete, fresh words.
2. Study how *others* use language.
3. Read aloud.

III. What Should You Do with Your Sermon Manuscript?

At least four options are available (but the last must be followed in this course):

- A. *Bring it* into the pulpit. The danger in this approach is that many preachers then *read* their message to the congregation. (Jonathan Edwards did just that.)
- B. *Reduce it* to a 1-2 page outline that you bring to the pulpit. (Stott used this approach.)
- C. *Leave it* at home so that you preach from memory without notes. Many preachers (e.g., Stott and Robinson) feel this is too much work and leads to concentration on the memorized script rather than on the message and congregation. I agree.
- D. *Leave it* at home and preach without notes but also without attempting to remember the exact words of the manuscript (i.e., extemporaneous preaching—see below).

IV. Why Preach Without Notes?

There are several advantages to preaching extemporaneous sermons rather than using notes:

- A. It forces you to really *know your material*. You'll practice with notes until it's internalized.
- B. It enables you to *preach with confidence* (memorizing helps you know your sermon well).
- C. It frees you up to *work on delivery*—an aspect often overlooked in sermon preparation.
- D. It helps you *speak more naturally* rather than tempting you to read your notes.

N.B. For a good study on this topic see Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979). He shows how to speak more effectively and naturally without notes. Koller is president of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago.

V. Why Should You Practice Preaching Your Message?

- A. Practice enables you to know the sermon well.
- B. Practice enables you to communicate the sermon well.
- C. Practice enables you to know what to cut out to keep to your time limit.

VI. How Should You Practice Preaching Your Message?

Follow these simple steps in practicing the message at least 6-8 times:

- A. 3 Days Before: Read the message through word for word *twice*.
- B. 2 Days Before: Preach it *two* more times while glancing at your manuscript only when needed.
- C. 1 Day Before: Preach the message *twice* more without any notes at all (especially to a person who cares about you). After each time, look at the manuscript to see what you forgot.
- D. The Morning You Preach: Preach through the message another *one or two* times (if possible, do it while looking at yourself in a large, full-body mirror).

Summary

- A. "There seems to be only one way to combine precision of language with immediacy of delivery, and that is for us to write the sermon in our study but decline to read it from the pulpit" (Stott, 255).
- B. "The whole process of sermon preparation, from beginning to end, was admirably summed up by the American black preacher who said, 'First, I reads myself full, next I thinks myself clear, next I prays myself hot, and then I lets go'" (Stott, 258).

Writing Papers Versus Writing Sermons

I. Introduction

- A. It has already been highlighted how reading and writing are different means of expression (cf. p. 67). For example, when reading one can immediately tell when a new section begins. A new paragraph starts or a heading appears, sometimes even underlined and in bold print!
- B. This clarity is not true for sermons. In a sermon it is the *speaker's* job to make sure listeners see:
1. He's stating a key point (main idea, main point, subject, etc.), which is accomplished through the use of either repetition (good) or restatement (better) of that point.
 2. He's moving from one point to the next in a transition. Manuscripting helps the speaker be clear about when he's shifting from one major section to another in the message.

(Now that we know that reading and writing are different, how can we *express* these differences in sermon manuscripts? What are some "do's and don'ts" of manuscripting? Notice the following...)

II. Contrast Chart

The following chart summarizes some differences between writing papers and writing sermons. For your sermon manuscript, make sure you follow the right hand column:

	<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>Sermon Manuscript (Prose)</u>
Existence of headings	Yes—always!	No—never!
Headings/main points	Incomplete sentence OK	Always have full sentences
Repetitions/restatements	Not very important	Vitally important
Transitions	Not very necessary	Necessary
Scripture references	OK to write "(v. 3)"	Write out the verse (no parentheses)
Introducing main text	Once is sufficient	Give it 2-3 times

See the Manuscript Grade Sheet (p. 24) to assure that your manuscript is written properly. Especially note the "Miscellaneous" section at the bottom that reminds you to put your structure in column abbreviations and to include a single page homiletical outline. (For an example see pages 51, 82-85.)

(The preceding ones are *prose* manuscripts and are the best type for beginning preachers. However, I designed another type of manuscript as a pastor I call an *outline* manuscript. Let's look at these...)

III. Outline Manuscripts

- A. Definition: a sermon manuscript that combines the outline and manuscript in full sentence form. (For an example see pages 86-90.)
- B. There's a few advantages of the outline manuscript:
1. It's *easier to write* if you have a computer. No one page outline is needed and main points can be written first then subordinate material added underneath as it comes to mind.
 2. It's *easier to read* if you use it in preaching. You can find your place more easily than a prose manuscript when you glance at it quickly to remind you of a key point.
 3. It's *easier to edit*. Prose manuscript side columns generally must be written in by hand, and if a page is edited then these column notations must be recopied.

Sample Sermon Manuscripts

There are two basic types of sermon manuscripts: prose and outline. The next four pages is a prose manuscript for the one page sermon outline on page 51. Pages 86-90 give a sample outline manuscript. Either type is OK for your sermons.

“Awe? Or Blah?” (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7) Prose Manuscript

For abbreviations in the left column see the bottom of page 22

Intro:	The disgusted wife complained to the marriage counselor, "I want a divorce because my husband treats me just like he does Jesus!" "What do you mean?" the counselor asked. "Well, I get twenty seconds of the same comments before every meal, half-hearted praise, one-way conversation for ten minutes a week... and every time I start talking his eyelids droop and he's on his way to slumber land!"
1: Arouse interest by shock	
Interest by humour	A little boy attended church with his father one Sunday morning. That evening, before getting into bed, he kneeled at his bedside and the little lips prayed, "Dear God, we had a good time at church today, but I wish you had been there."
2: Raise Need	Obviously God is there when we attend church, and God is there when we approach Him in our own personal quiet time. But unfortunately, we often don't recognize His presence and sometimes we even end up in slumber land.
	We don't mean to be disrespectful, but often we are. We know we should burst forth in awe of God, but instead, our thoughts wander, we yawn, and we go through the same motions and mutter the same clichés. Rather than awe, it's blah!!
3: Subject Restatement	How can we honour God as he deserves? What are the ingredients of a true reverence for God?
4: Bkgrd	This is not a new issue. Way back when the temple was brand new people still had problems honouring God properly. In fact, Solomon probably saw people dishonouring God even as they approached the temple for worship, given that his palace was right next to the temple courtyards.
5: Preview R, Passage	Today's passage will reveal two ways we should show reverence for God. King Solomon discusses these two ways to truly honour God in Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. The Book of Ecclesiastes, at the beginning of chapter five.
T, MPI R SP "A"	In the first three verses of Ecclesiastes 5 you'll see you must <u>honor God in your worship</u> . Show your reverence for God by sensitively approaching Him in adoration. Let's see three observations about proper worship in these verses. First, notice that proper worship only occurs when we <i>prepare ourselves</i> to worship God. You'll see this in the first phrase:
5:1a	"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God."
Principle (house)	The "house of God" in Solomon's day referred to the Jerusalem temple, but since there is no temple today and the Spirit Himself dwells within our hearts this must be applied more broadly. I see it as meaning whenever and wherever we approach God in worship.
Explanation	But what does it mean to "guard your steps?" The word for "guard" here means "to watch or to observe." It has the idea of being careful, so in this case it means that we should make sure we are properly prepared to pay homage to a holy God.
ILL (seminary)	One of my observations here at DTS has been that, in general, first year men seem to be better worshippers than us fourth year men. I'm not surprised that the first year class tonight sponsors the worship and praise night since they don't yet have their four years of training in obsessiveness.
ILL (chapel)	I remember last semester in an SMF chapel slide show a guy walked around campus and spotted another guy reading by the fountain. He said to himself, "Hey, there's someone reading his Bible between classes—must be a first year guy!" The whole chapel burst out laughing, and I chuckled too. But then I began thinking, "Hey, what happened to my times of worship, praise, and Scripture reading under the trees which fed my soul those first few semesters?"
APP (music)	How can you prepare to meet God? One way is to arrive to chapel early for personal prayer. Don't always sit by your friends and don't even bring your mail or study notes. I'm also a fan for prayer in

natural settings. Behind my apartment is a beautiful area with a quiet stream. Maybe there's a similar natural setting close to where you live. My wife and I also love to pray with our Maranatha Praise Strings album on in the background. It stimulates us to humble ourselves before God and be ready for what He wants to teach us.

T, SP "B"

Proper worship not only requires preparation for worship, but it also happens only when we *listen to God*. Notice the end of verse one. We're encouraged to:

5:1b

"Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know they do wrong."

1

The text says that fools unknowingly sin by offering up a meaningless "sacrifice." Notice that this "sacrifice" is contrasted with "listening." I think this indicates that the "sacrifice" probably refers to offering impulsive and meaningless words—words repeated so many times that they've lost their meaning.

2

The next verse continues this idea by exhorting us to weigh our words and thoughts carefully because of who God is. It commands:

5:2a

"Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God."

a

APP:
Prayer

Here's a command not to be an obsessive talker or thinker. This normally has been applied to prayer like the kind of unthinking prayer Jesus referred to in Matthew 6:7 when he said, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." Try praying without using words like "bless" and you'll get the intent here.

APP:

Singing
(personal
ILL)

But I think that limiting this only to prayer is too narrow. Why can't this also refer to singing? I remember once when my pastor's wife asked me to pray for her concerning whether she should sing a particular song the next day at the Sunday morning service. Now I knew she sang beautifully, so I asked her why she couldn't sing it. "Look at the words," she replied as she showed me the song, "The lyrics say I'm willing for God to take anything from my life in order to be like Jesus. That includes my husband and my children. I'm just not so sure I can honestly say that." I learned a tremendous lesson that day—that singing is a higher form of speaking, so we should never sing anything which we would never speak. My pastor followed this concept a few weeks later while leading the song, "I Surrender All." He encouraged everyone who couldn't promise that to God not to sing. I was shocked how many refrained when they really considered the words.

T

The next phrase jabs us with the reason we should guard our tongue in worship:

5:2b

"God is in heaven and you are on earth."

b

The reason for the command is because God is awesome and majestic while we're puny in comparison. He dwells in heaven in unapproachable light, in impeccable holiness. We're confined to but a tiny, rotating ball among the millions of planetary creations. How can we earthlings be so presumptuous as to barge our way mouth first into His awesome presence? In light of this Solomon advises:

5:2c

"so let your words be few."

APP:

Ps. 46:10

Projected
Scripture

We do well to have times when we listen by keeping our mouths shut. After all, who can listen while he's babbling away? This is God's intent in Psalm 46:10 where He says, "Be still and know that I am God." I've found that's a tough assignment, but one thing has helped. You might put this on your list of ideas for a future church that you'll pastor. Project a Scripture verse up in the front of the church for pre-service meditation in the morning worship service. I've seen how this reminds people not to talk but to prepare themselves to listen to God.

T

SP "C"

The first two verses have shown us that true worship only occurs when we prepare ourselves and when we listen to God. In verse three we'll see the third observation about how to have proper worship—it happens only when we *set aside our cares*; otherwise we end up daydreaming:

5:3

"As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words."

APP:

What we need is more care-less worship. Notice I said "care-less," not "careless." I confess to you that I really struggle with keeping my mind from wandering in prayer. I start off real well, but after ten or fifteen seconds I begin thinking about an errand I need to do, an event that happened yesterday, or

- Stand up whatever. But last month I came across a suggestion to pray standing up! Hey, it works! By the way, did you know that there is not a single place in Scripture where it mentions anyone sitting down while in prayer? Maybe you need to walk, stand or list your cares on a sheet of paper as they come to mind then forget about them to set aside your concerns in order to worship properly.
- List cares
- Big T (flashback) Verses 1-3 have said to honor God in your worship. This happens when we prepare ourselves, listen to God, and set aside our cares. Now verses 4-6 give us a second key how to really honour God. They say to...
- MPII, R SP "A" Honor God in your vows. If you truly respect God, you fulfill your promises. Notice how verse 4 says that all vows must be paid:
- 5:4 "When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow."
- Explain "vow" (ILLS) By "vow" Solomon means an unconditional, solemn promise to do or not do something. I've made four vows in my lifetime. My first was when I promised God in high school that I would remain sexually pure until marriage. Then in 1977 I covenanted to God during an Institute in Basic Life Principles seminar that I would spend a minimum of five minutes daily in the Bible until my death. In my third vow I swore to my wife that I would never divorce her, and, also on that wedding night, I pledged to God that I would never be closed to serving Him anywhere in the world.
- T SP "B" That's what I mean by a "vow." Notice that each affirmation is voluntary. No one ever has to vow. That's why verse five says that no vow at all is better than an unfulfilled vow:
- 5:5 "It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it."
- ILL (homiletics professor's experience) All vows are completely optional—but if you do vow, God requires payment. Dr. Sunukjian once told me that he really wanted to teach here at DTS, but after ten years of school here the Pastoral Ministries department told him that he needed a PhD. He got his PhD from UCLA and called the seminary. They told him, "Great! But you need some practical experience first."
- (continued) So he pursued a pastorate, but was of the conviction that if it took a unanimous vote of the elders to get him in the church, then it should take a unanimous vote to get him out! So he made an agreement with the church not to leave until the entire board approved.
- (continued) Only two years after beginning that pastorate he got a call from Dallas Seminary, offering him a position on the P.M. faculty. This was the opportunity he'd anticipated for years, and he shared it with great excitement to the board—but they didn't think he should leave. So he stayed.
- (continued) Three more years passed, then the telephone rang. Haddon Robinson said on the other end of the line, "Don, we really need you now to replace one of our faculty who's leaving." Again, Sunukjian placed it before the board. Their response? "Pastor, we're just getting going on this building project now. We don't want you to leave yet. The timing's not right." Again, he declined the seminary's offer and held to his vow.
- T SP "C" You can't help but admire a man like that who made a promise and stuck to it, even though he never thought that he'd be at that church seven years before coming here. In our day, as in Solomon's, commitments are easily rationalized and broken. That's why Solomon told us in verse 6, "Don't sin through an impulsive vow then later confess it was a mistake." He wrote:
- 5:6a "Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, 'My vow was a mistake.'"
- Jew Imagine the Jew confidently offering to the priest the required sacrifice for a vow at the temple, only to later be tempted to break it. He rushes back to the priest, "Hey, I really shouldn't have done that! It was just a small goof-up. Can you pull some strings to undo the vow?"
- T SP "D" God says, "Don't do that! You're not required to make a vow in the first place, but don't make it worse by going back to the one to whom you made the vow and renege on your commitment!" God takes the breaking of vows very seriously—so seriously that when we treat them lightly God's anger at our rash vows may wipe out our accomplishments and possessions. Look at the end of verse 6:
- 5:6b "Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?"

- ILL (Scriptural) Remember Ananias and Sapphira? They sold some land and promised God He could have the money. But when that money landed in their hot little hands they had second thoughts about giving it all. "Let's only give a portion of it," they agreed together. God didn't think too highly of their broken vow. He didn't just "destroy the works of their hands," though. He took their lives.
- APPs: time money priorities Maybe you have an outstanding debt to God in a particular area. You owe Him the time you promise to give Him. You owe the tithe or percentage of income you promised. You made another specific commitment to Him to help keep your priorities straight while here at seminary. God has ways of disciplining his children who neglect payment of their pledge. He once whittled my salary down to a \$27.00 a month paycheck because I didn't hold true to return to Him a specific percentage of my income that I'd committed. Maybe He's trying to get your attention through financial difficulty, too. Maybe He's taken away something materially to remind you to take your vows seriously.
- Big T So what's Solomon's key point? This whole passage basically says...
- MI (1) R 2 Show reverence for God in proper worship and paying vows. Don't dishonour God by approaching Him frivolously in worship or in unfulfilled, stupid promises. Instead, Solomon concludes by exhorting us to fear God by not dreaming and making rash vows. Verse 7...
- 5:7 "Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God."
- a Flippant worship and excessive talking are both futile, meaningless. Solomon's conclusion is, in effect, that reverence for God means "cut the dreaming in worship, button the lips that make rash vows, and fear God." This word for "meaningless" literally refers to a vapor. That's about how much substance there is to not seriously worshipping Him or being rash and negligent in fulfilling our vows.
- b He exhorts us instead to fear God—to show awe in His presence not "blah" in His presence, to exalt Him not to exhaust Him with weary worship or wayward vows.
- 3 Maybe you need to make a specific application to your own life in one of these two areas—worship or vows.
- APPs (worship) Concerning worship, what one way can you change to approach God more reverently in worship? Change your time of personal worship? Stand up while you pray? Get to church or chapel a bit earlier for silent meditation? Try listening to Him as much as you talk to Him?
- APPs (vows) Concerning vows, the second area, I wonder if perhaps you've forgotten about a past commitment you've made to God, to your wife, or to your kids. Regarding your Bible reading? Maybe Bible memorization? A promise to your wife that you'd take her out regularly? Perhaps you've made a commitment to missionary service and need to renew that commitment in preparation for next week's missions conference.
- End Each one of us has a tremendous need to reverence God.
- Prayer "Lord God, we recognize that You are totally worthy of our awe-inspired, reverential worship. You are One who also considers our vows seriously. Help us to fulfill 100% of our commitments and to give you the respect You so deserve. Amen."

GFEFC/ Glory Joy Christian Church (CNEC)/Hebron BP/ CIC/ Bethany Presb.
 10 May 87/ 10 May 92/ 11 May 97/ 13 May 07/ 13 May 12
 NIV

Dr. Rick Griffith
 Mother's Day
 30 Minutes

PPT Slides

Title

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle...

2 Timothy 1:1-6

Simple Deductive

Topic: Motherhood
Subject: A mother's influence
Complement: is the most powerful force in the world.
Purpose: The listeners will thank and appreciate their mothers for their ministry in their lives.

Introduction

Black

1. [Arouse Interest: Mother's are heroes.]

Pie

- a. A schoolteacher giving a lesson in fractions asked, "Johnny, suppose there were 7 in your family—a mother, a father, and 5 children. And suppose there was pie for dessert. What fraction of the pie would you get?"

Johnny answered, "One-sixth."

"But don't you understand?" replied the teacher. "Don't you know about fractions?"

"I know about fractions and I know about mothers too," remarked Johnny. "Mom would say that she didn't want any!" ("Mother" tract) Isn't that kind of selflessness so typical of a mother—to work so hard on something that she herself does not enjoy?

Bedroll

- b. During inspection on a Boy Scout outing, a scoutmaster found an umbrella hidden in the bedroll of a young camper. Puzzled, the scoutmaster asked, "Why did you bring an umbrella on a scout trip? The tenderfoot sighed, "Sir, did you ever have a mother?" ("The Fine Art of Mothering" tract)

Mothers

- c. That's just like a mother—one of the most difficult yet rewarding careers available. One writer notes, "Isn't it strange how we elevate careers and lower homemaking to the commonplace? Think how many skills a mother must possess to carry out her duties. She must know something about teaching, interior decorating, cooking, dietetics, psychology, hygiene, social relations, clothing, household equipment, and a host of other things."

Skilled

M.D.

"Still, if a woman teaches someone else's children she is given professional status—a teacher. But if she teaches her own children, she is just a mother. If she does interior decorating she is a career woman; but if she decorates her own home, she is just a homemaker. If she takes care of others, she's a nurse; but if she nurses her own children, she's just 'mom' doing her job" ("Mother" tract). Yes, motherhood demands many skills that we easily overlook to reward "career women."

W.O.W.

Mothers
Day

2. Because of her great position and influence, it is fitting to honor Mom today.

Jarvis

- a. The practice in America of setting aside every second Sunday in May to honor mothers was first practiced in Philadelphia, initiated by Miss Anne Jarvis who lobbied for many years with several Presidents to get the day initiated nationwide.
- b. Perhaps Miss Jarvis got the idea from England's "Mothering Sunday"—a custom where everyone on Mid-Lent Sunday attended their mother church where they were baptized.
- c. The history of Mother's Day actually extends back to ancient Greece. The Greeks celebrated a festival pretty much amounting to mother worship.

d. But the practice of honoring mothers didn't start in America. It goes back even further to OT times. The fifth commandment says, "Honor your father and your mother."

6

e. In any case, I'm glad that the practice has also come to Singapore. But it's with some sadness that my wife Susan has Mother's Days without her sons since our youngest son left in 2011. We have three sons: Kurt (IT), Stephen (pilot) & John (designer).

Evolution

3. If I asked you who made the greatest influence in your life, what would you say? Why do you hold certain values and priorities over others? What source molded you that way more than any other? TV? School? A certain friend or teacher? The Bible? Think about it long enough and you will agree that it is your mother—for good or ill.

MI

4. Preview: Today we will see in the Bible some excellent examples of influential mothers who passed on a spiritual heritage to their children. My prayer is that you will be convinced that ***mothering is the most influential and important job in the world*** [main idea]. There's no more significant work than shaping the lives of the next generation [restatement].

Black

5. Let's first take a look at two mothers who influenced the life of one of Paul's most valued traveling companions. The man is Timothy and these godly women are noted in 2 Timothy 1:5. But first let's read verses 1-6 to get the context. Now notice in verse 5 that...

MP I.

**Timothy trusted Christ through his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5).
[Timothy became a disciple by the influence of these two most important women in his life.]**

Lois

A. Notice how Paul claims that *the women* in Timothy's life had the greatest spiritual impact.

2 MJ

1. I find it interesting that Timothy's father is not mentioned here—but Paul met Timothy on his second missionary journey and when you look at Acts 16:1 you notice that Eunice was a Jewish Christian but Timothy's father was a Gentile—probably an unbelieving Gentile. Jews lived all over the Roman world.

Map

Unequal Yoke

- a. So we have a boy here born of a mixed marriage—not only between a Jew and a Gentile, but probably a believer and an unbeliever.
- b. Somehow Eunice made a mistake by marrying a non-Christian or else became a Christian after the marriage—yet that wasn't going to stop her from having a godly influence on young Tim's life.

Black

2. No doubt some of you find yourself in a similar situation—raising children without the influence of a godly father over them to supplement your efforts.

- a. Let the example of Eunice encourage you. Don't worry that as a sole believing parent that you can't provide the kind of spiritual nurture as other families with two parents.

Lincoln

- b. Abraham Lincoln said: "No man is poor who has a godly mother" and he was right!

Fun!

- d. Mothers, as your kids grow up and reflect upon you what will they remember most?

- 1) Some remember their mom's *depression* more than any other trait.
- 2) One man's most vivid memories are of his mother's *anger*.

My Life
17 slides

3) In my home my mother was the greatest influence. My father was in the Navy and due to the pressures on their marriage from him being out fighting in the Vietnam War their marriage dissolved when I was 4 years old. She remarried twice (last in 1972 so the present marriage has lasted), so my background is certainly less than ideal—four children in five years, three fathers, 12 divorces among my parents and those whom they married,

several year gaps between father figures ... Yet my mom was a stabilizing force through it all. I especially remember her for her individual encouragement to me.

Remember

- 4) Mothers, what will your kids remember most about you when they grow up?
 - a) Your pushing and pushing for them to get good grades? Moodiness?
 - b) Let your children remember you most for your godliness!

(In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul reminds Timothy that it was his mother's sincere faith that he remembered in his mother. Not only did Paul claim it was *the women* in Timothy's life which had the greatest spiritual impact *in him*, but notice a second thing...)

Others

B. Our mothers are the greatest single tool of God to help us influence the lives of *others*. No person can train us better to serve Christ than our mother.

1. Timothy grew up to be a tremendous tool of God due to his mother's influence.

Ephesus

a. Even when Paul met him he was called a "disciple" [Acts 16:1].

The Man

b. Due to his mother and grandmother's influence Timothy had a good reputation not only in his hometown (Lystra) but also nearby towns like Iconium.

c. Soon Paul would call him his "son in the faith," meaning his younger fellow-worker who was so close that he was like a son [2 Tim 1:2; 2:1; 1 Tim 1:2].

d. Timothy became the constant companion of the greatest apostle ever to live, even though he was a very young man. Fifteen years *after* he started traveling with Paul the apostle told him "don't let anyone despise your youth" so he was young when used of God! (By the way, don't believe the lie that the youth are the church of *tomorrow*. They are the church of *today*!)

e. God had Timothy minister to Paul just before his execution. In 2 Timothy 4:9 Paul asks, "Do your best to come to me quickly" and he probably made it to Paul in time.

f. In a real sense, you and I are presently benefiting from the ministry of Lois and Eunice into Timothy who served Paul who gave us one half the New Testament! What an influence godly mothers can have!

2. Susanna Wesley was such a woman also—with such an influence on her 19 children that most don't even know her husband's name, the Rev. Samuel Wesley.

Suzanna

• Samuel

a. You will recognize the names of two of her sons though:

• Charles

1) Charles Wesley wrote several hundred hymns, some of which are in your hymnal.

2) John Wesley became the founder of Methodism—a denomination who's influence has been strong for the cause of Christ through the centuries.

• John

3) These two sons, under God, brought revival to England while France underwent a bloody revolution.

b. Susanna Wesley impacted all of England through her children! But how?

** She spent one hour each and every day shut up with God alone in her room, praying for her 19 children by name. She also had several rules:

- 1) No child was given anything because he cried for it... (In her house the kids rarely cried loudly).
 - 2) No eating and drinking between meals, except when sick.
 - 3) At 7 PM, each child was put to bed; at 8 PM she left the room. She never allowed herself to sit by the bed until the child fell asleep.
 - 4) The little ones had their own table near the main table. When they could handle the fork and knife, they were "promoted" to the family table.
 - 5) Each child had to eat and drink everything before him.
 - 6) Children had to address each other as "Sister _____" or "Brother _____."
 - 7) She never showed anger or scolded. She would always explain and explain.
- ** You can trace the legacy of her children down through the centuries. Her godly life multiplied into the lives of her children and into your life and mine.

Doris/Kurt

3. A modern-day example of this kind of influence is my wife's family background.

- a. Susan's Mom (Doris) and grandmother (Signe) never served in full-time ministry.
- b. Yet their influence in Susan's life has reached literally hundreds of thousands of people for Christ through her daughter through an evangelistic singing group that shared Christ throughout Asia [cf. "arrows" of Psalm 121].

4 slides

Toward Evil

4. However, since a mother's influence is so strong, the opposite situation can occur too—

- a. One mother, although very religious, despised her son, mistreated him and belittled him to the point where one day the young lad of 17 years old got fed up with it all.
- b. In the presence of his parents, he turned around on their farm and walked down the road, intending to never see them again. He didn't so much even turn around and wave, let alone give his mother a "good-bye" hug.
- c. He walked off, his face set like a flint. He never did see them again. But his life did become one of influence, negative influence, and you know his name—Adolf Hitler.

• Hitler

(So, you ask, how does all this apply to me? Good question! I'm glad you asked...)

MP II.

**Mother's Day should remind each of us of some important things.
I want to suggest an application for each of us no matter who we are.**

Mothers

- A. For mothers here today...

1. What kind of legacy are you leaving to your children? For what will they most remember you after they're gone?
2. What do you need to do to have them remember what you *want* them to remember?
 - a. Commit never to scold?
 - b. Begin that time of reading from the Bible each day with your child? One friend every morning had an individual quiet time with each of her 9, 7, and 3-year-old kids.

- c. Some of us may need to quit our job to give that kind of care! After all, the only command to mothers in Scripture is Titus 2:5 that says they should be “busy at home.”

• Living

B. For those with mothers still living...

1. Flowers, cards, gifts, letters, phone calls... these are good and important.
2. But today praise your mother for a character quality she invested into your life.
 - a. At our wedding Susan and I took about ten minutes expressing to our parents appreciation for the character qualities they had invested in our lives. I thanked my Mom for her encouragement.
 - b. What positive trait can you thank your Mom for today? Prayer life? Commitment to Scripture? Hospitality? Compassion? Discipline?

(Some of you are saying, "I can't do these things since my mother isn't alive anymore...")

• Passed

C. For you whose mothers have passed away...

1. Write her a letter—tell her things you wished you had expressed when she was alive.
2. A friend of mine did this many years ago and found that it really relieved her of an incredible amount of stress.

(What have I been saying today? Simply this...)

Conclusion

MI

1. A mother's influence is the most powerful force in the world [Main Idea Repeated].
No other influence on your life has matched that of your mother! [Restatement]

Hand Cradle

2. There's a great amount of truth to the old cliché, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”—for good in the case of Timothy and for evil in the case of Hitler.

Poem

3. Whatever good you do, do it now!

If you have a smile for Mother,
Give it now.
If you have a kind word,
Speak it now.
If you have a flower for Mother,
Share it now.
She'll not need it when the angels
Greet her at the golden gate;
Give the smiles while she is living
If you wait it may be too late.

Black

4. Prayer