

PREACHING CHEAT SHEET

This Art of Better Preaching Cheat Sheet will help give you a framework when crafting your messages. Use it to drive clarity, relevance and connect your message with your audience.

1. IS THE BOTTOM LINE CLEAR?

If you can't say the main point of your message in a single sentence, your audience will never remember it. As Howard Hendricks used to say, "A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pews."

Example:

- *Prayer is not a button to be pushed. It's a relationship to be pursued.*

Your Bottom Line:

2. WHAT'S MY OPENING LINE?

How am I going to start? Not with "hello", "good morning," or "nice day."

Examples:

- Start with an opening line: Your wife knows your default.
- Or a question like "Any car buffs here?"

Your Opening Line:

3. THE INTRODUCTION

How do I get from the introduction to the main point of the message?

- This is your transition. It moves you out of your opening minutes into the main body. This could be a story, or a key phrase.
- You need to figure out how to get from point A to point B smoothly and logically, without a lot of turbulence or a lack of congruity.

Your Transition:

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4. WHAT'S MY MAIN POINT?

Not points. Point. What's this all driving to?

Examples:

- *God doesn't runaway from run aways.*
- *If you don't take the Sabbath, the Sabbath will take you.*

Your Main Point:

5. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This establishes relevance.

Examples:

- *If you don't get this, you'll burnout.*
- *This explains why so many of you are so tired all the time.*

Why does it matter:

6. WHERE'S THE POWER IN TEXT?

There's a phrase, a word, an adjective, a verb, a verse, an encounter that either highlights a tension, offends or is surprising. Camp there.

The Power in Text:

7. HOW AM I MOVING TOWARD APPLICATION?

This is where most preachers fall short. Lots of information. Zero application.

- Information without application equals little transformation. It's great to know something, but what are you going to DO with it?
- Again, if you can't answer the question, don't expect your congregation to.

The Application:

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8. WHAT'S MY MAIN *TO DO* (application)?

People don't do general, they do specific. "I think I'll work out" has far less power than "I'm doing 20 squats and 20 pushups in the next 5 minutes."

Examples:

- *Take a day off.*
- *Surrender to God...now...as in the next five minutes.*
- *Pray for 5 minutes every day.*

Your To Do:

9. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

"Why" creates urgency and fuels motivation.

Example:

- *If you don't work out/take a day off/stop running...here's what happens. If you do, these things happen...Explain.*

The Why:

10. HOW AM I CLOSING?

Crash landings happen all the time. You're in the last 5 minutes and you have no idea how to get out. Plan your last line and stick to it.

Your Closing: