

TTT 403. "Your Voice Matters" Tips for new and inexperienced speakers. Part 8. 25 February 2025

Teaching Tip 403 | "Your Voice Matters". Part 8 - Personal Sharing. Tips for new and inexperienced speakers | Malcolm Cox

Introduction

Last week, we explored the importance of prayer. This week, we assess the significance of personal sharing.

Today's Tip

Today's tip is another from my friend Roger Packham. Roger says:

"Include personal sharing: Consider your examples/ illustrations and how you use self-disclosure to connect with others through your teaching/preaching."

Thanks, Roger. Your point is vitally important. What does healthy personal sharing look like? How do we discern the difference between 'want to tell' and 'need to know'?

Why? Connection

When you share stories from your own life or give us insight into your heart and feelings, you are no longer a 'Preacher' on a pedestal but a brother, sister, and fellow pilgrim. Effective preaching and teaching are dependent on the bond of trust between the speaker and those listening. One of the best ways to generate trust is to reveal yourself as a normal human being. Close the distance between you and your heroes by sharing personally.

One other thing on connection. Generally speaking, a self-deprecating story creates a better connection than one displaying your strengths. There is a place for sharing how God gave you a victory, but it needs to be done in a way that brings glory to God and doesn't big you up!

Point to Jesus

I vividly remember someone giving a communion talk many years ago. They opened up about the sexual abuse they had endured as a child.

I felt tremendous sympathy for them. However, after the sharing, it was impossible to think clearly about Jesus and the cross as we took bread and wine. All the congregation could do was feel a sense of horror and pity towards the person who had shared their story. Don't get me wrong, I admired the courage, and there is a time and place for such sharing. However, when it obscures Jesus, it has not achieved its purpose.

That occasion was a good example of 'want to tell' rather than 'need to know'. They felt so strongly that they wanted to tell us that they forgot to ask the question of whether we needed to know.

When you consider what you are about to share, ask in what way it points back to Jesus, God the Father or the Holy Spirit? In a recent lesson I shared a story about my wife being a powerful protector towards our son when he was young. It was easy to use that story to point back towards God as our ultimate protector:

“Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.” (Psalm 91:14 NRSV)

How

Just a few tips on how to do this.

1. Keep a file. I record things that happen to me as voice memos or notes and keep them on file in my computer.
2. Review photographs. We tend to take photographs of significant events. They might trigger a memory of something worth sharing
3. Talk to someone. Ask a good friend or a family member if they can remember anything that happened to you or around you that connects with the point of your lesson. Sometimes, other people remember things that we forget.

Question

How do you feel about personal sharing? Are you worried about how people might feel about you? Why not incorporate some personal sharing in your next lesson and let me know how it goes?

Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

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<https://aim.moodlecloud.com/>.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical?

Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: malcolm@malcolmcox.org.

If you'd like a copy of my free eBook on spiritual disciplines, "How God grows His people", sign up at my website: <http://www.malcolmcox.org>.

Please pass the link on, subscribe, and leave a review.

Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm
