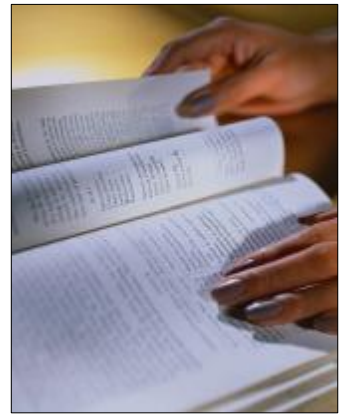


How To Read The Bible

Public Bible-Reading In Church



1 Timothy 4

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance 10 (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe. 11 Command and teach these things. 12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. NIV



Investigate

Read 1 Timothy 4.

What will happen in later times?

How is Timothy to respond to this?

How has Timothy been brought up (v6, also 2 Tim 1:5)?

To what is Timothy to devote himself (v13,14)? Why?



To Think About

What will it look like for those who read the Bible aloud in church to devote themselves to the task, **being diligent** in these matters?

God is speaking to US!

The Bible is the main way that God, through his Spirit, has chosen to speak to us. It's His word. Therefore, we have a responsibility not only to teach it well, but to READ it well. Hearing God speak should be A HIGH POINT of our time together, not just something to get out of the way before the Bible Talk.





When we read the Bible aloud, we need to do more than just say aloud the words on the page. We should be communicating the thoughts and ideas of the author.

To communicate, we first need to understand. To understand, we first need to get organised.

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Get Organised!:

Allow yourself enough time to read through the passage leisurely a number of times.

- ◆ Read the sections on either side of the passage so that you can get an idea of the context.
- ◆ Look at different translations. These can help to bring out meaning that isn't immediately obvious.
- ◆ Take time over SEVERAL days to read it so that God's word can work on you. DON'T leave it until the morning of Church!
- ◆ If possible, photocopy (or print out) an enlarged copy of the passage which has room for you to underline, make notes, and add marks for pauses etc..



Presentation:

When you read aloud, you reveal meaning through your **emphasis**, **phrasing** and **expression**.

1. Emphasis

Meaning comes through emphasis. Wrong emphasis clouds, confuses, and changes meaning.



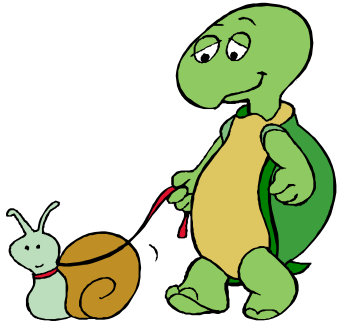
Action:

How can changing the emphasis of this sentence change its meaning?
"We preach Christ to all men".

- Rule 1: Emphasise those words which introduce **each new idea**. This means **not** emphasising old ideas or synonyms
Eg John 1:1: "*In the beginning was the Word. The Word was **with** God, and the Word **was** God*".
Eg Phil 1:4 "*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with **joy***"
- Rule 2: Emphasise those words which **make a contrast**.
Eg: "*Ask God to **ble**ss those who persecute you. Yes, ask him to **ble**ss, **not** curse*"
Eg: "***R**ighteousness is the road to life; **w**ickedness is the road to death*"
Eg: "*The **w**ages of sin is death; but the **g**ift of God is eternal life*"
Eg: "***S**ome were convinced by what he said, but **o**thers would not believe*".
- Rule 3: When an adjective and a noun come together, you **MOSTLY** emphasise the adjective because it describes the noun.
Eg: "*God has saved us and called us to live a **holy** life*"
Eg "*But when you are invited, take the **low**est place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a **better** place.'*"
- Rule 4: **Don't** emphasise words in **parenthesis**.
Eg: "*Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go..."*"

Try applying these rules when reading this verse

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.



2. Phrasing & Pauses:

Don't rush! Pauses give deeper meaning to your reading. They give the listeners the chance to understand and remember what they have just heard. In fact, wrong pauses can even give the wrong meaning.

Eg (Luke 2:16 NIV) *"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger."* OR

(Rom 1:1 NIV) *"Paul a servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God--"*

A **phrase** is a group of related words. You group together the related words by **pausing** at the end of them. Eg (Phil 3:12 NIV) *"Not that I have already obtained all this / or have already been made perfect / but I press on / to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."*

HINT: Mark the passage, with a "/" where a pause is required.

Rule 1: Don't pause between a person or object, and a **restricting phrase** which follows it. They are essential for meaning. Eg "God listens to men who are devout and do his will." He doesn't listen to all men— he listens to those who are devout and do his will.

Rule 2: Do pause between a person or thing, and a **non-restricting phrase** which follows it. It simply adds information. Eg *"The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question"* To pause adds information about all Sadducee. If you don't pause, you imply that only those Sadducees who say there is no resurrection came to Jesus.

What about "My wife in the straw hat planted those roses"?

Rule 3: Pause before or after an **important idea** to draw attention to it.

To point to the subject of the sentence, pause **after it**. Eg. It is the shepherd of the flock / who goes in by the door.

To point to the object, or the action of the subject, pause **before it**. Eg. And when he had exhausted every kind of temptation, the devil withdrew / until his next opportunity. Eg. Now concerning / food offered to idols (This is the next in a list of matters Paul is responding to — see 1 Cor 7:1; 8:1; 12:1)

3. Expression

Don't just say words, reveal the thought behind those words. This only comes when we understand the passage. Eg. (John 1:45-46 NIV) *"Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." {46} "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip."*

Good expression uses the tools of volume, pace and pitch

How should you express Nathanael's reply? Surprise? Agreement? Doubt? Sarcasm?

Sometimes the writer helps the reader to give the correct expression.

Eg. (John 6:5-6 NIV) *"When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" {6} He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do."*

Variation: Varying your speed, your volume and your pitch help cue the listener in to which parts are most important, as well as making your reading more interesting. Slow down on the parts which are most important, and speed up a little through the parts which are less significant.

Your three tools for achieving expression are **volume, pace, and pitch**.

Other hints:

- ◆ Keep **your finger** on the place.
- ◆ Make sure **people at the back** can hear.
- ◆ Stand up straight, and **breathe deeply**. Use your diaphragm, rather than your shoulders, to breathe in and to push air out.
- ◆ **Practice reading onto tape**. You may not like what you hear! But don't blame the tape! The general rule is that you think you are reading more expressively than you actually are.

Microphones:

- ◆ **There are different types of microphones**. A vocal mike (designed for singing) has a short range—it will only pick up your voice if you are close. Other mikes are designed for speech and have a longer range. Know what sort of mike you are using, and adjust how close you stand accordingly.
- ◆ Before the service, **check** the microphone - don't tap it, or blow into it. Speak as you would when you are reading the Bible, so that the volume level can be adjusted. If you lower your head to read the Bible, you will probably be closer to the mike, and the volume will increase.
- ◆ Tapping the top of the microphone can damage the diaphragm behind the mesh. Gently tapping the **body** of the microphone will let you know whether it is working.
- ◆ If the microphone has a **switch**, make sure you turn it on before you start speaking.



Action

Activity 1:

Read through the following verses. How can emphasis, pausing and expression increase the hearers' understanding? Add marks and notes to help you. Read it to a partner, then give some helpful comments on each other.

Phil 2:14-18: Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. NIV

Activity 2:

Prepare the following passages to read aloud. Make notes about the process as you go.

Luke 22:1-23

Psalm 130

Esther 5

Adapted from: Clifford Warne and Paul White, *How to Read the Bible Aloud*, (AIO Press, Sydney, 1986). ISBN 0 908089 35 X



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blacktown**
presbyterian
church

...growing followers of Jesus