



WHY PERSUASION

Teaching the Word of God is more than just passing along information. Teaching the Word is more than informing people what the Bible is all about. The making of disciples is more than the transfer of information.

If communicating God's truth is anything – it is persuasion. Heaven and Hell are at stake. The path that leads to life and the path that leads to death are before you. The eternal good of all people is on the line. Eternity is hanging in the balance. Teaching God's Word to others is not merely presenting information. We are quite literally pleading with open Bibles for Spirit-empowered, Word-centered, convictional transformation by faith. This is what it means to make disciples! Whether pre-conversion or post-conversion – helping someone follow Jesus demands careful exegesis (i.e. being Word centered) shared in such a way to persuade.

THE BIBLICAL MODEL: There is not one biblical sermon (prophet or apostle or Jesus) that proclaimed the Word for mere intellectual stimulation. It simply does not exist. When the Word is shared, it is always intended to persuade the conscience to live more fully by faith.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5: *And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

Does this mean that Paul is against persuasion? It might sound like it on the surface, but I think more is going on here. Paul is simply saying that the carnal or fleshly use of persuasion for personal gain (which was common in Greco-Roman culture) is not his methodology. He doesn't persuade with slick presentations but rather he persuades with the Word.

ACTS 26:27-29: *King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains."*



Paul was clearly committed to persuasion! He was bold in declaring his desire to persuade all people with the Word – even to high ranking political figures.

COLOSSIANS 4:3-4: *At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison – that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*

Paul even prayed for the Word to be made known in such a way to convince, to persuade – so that more might come to know and follow Christ Jesus.

GOD'S WORK & YOUR WORK

GOD'S WORK: The Spirit of God, through the Word of God does the ultimate work of persuading

THE MESSENGER: God uses His people as the conduit through which His Word flows to others.

THE MAKING OF DISCIPLES: All people come to follow Jesus and grow in conformity to Jesus through the Word of God. This Word is taught by Christ's followers. The transformative power is in the Word of God through the convicting work of the Spirit of God. However, God uses human messengers to both communicate His Word but also to apply the Word to the heart *and then* call for a faith-filled response.

TABLE DISCUSSION: Why is it easier to share information from God's Word without actually trying to persuade with the Word?

WHAT IS ARRANGEMENT

The longest way around is always the safest way home! We have rounded the final corner of our Preparation Pathway, and we are now ready bring God's Word to someone else. It is now time to go from the biblical audience to those God has put in front of us to disciple – our one-on-one Bible study, a small group, our children, etc. If we don't round this bend – if we don't think about how to bring the Main Argument to the people God has put in front of us – we will not effectively communicate the Word to others. We might give intellectual talks or ancient history lessons about Jesus, but we won't actually bring God's Word to the hearts and lives of people today. In short – we will not effectively help others follow Jesus.



IMAGINE: Exegesis (i.e. the careful study of the Bible) is like pearl diving. You've dove down time and again to find pearls and you've collected a massive bucket of really cool pearls. But now that though you've found a bunch of pearls, you aren't ready to share God's Word with others yet. You must do the careful work of putting them together so that those who hear you are not left sorting through a bucket of pearls. But rather – it is your job to take bucket of pearls and make it into a beautiful string of pearls.

This is called arrangement – taking the glorious truths that you've discovered in the Word and ordering them in such a way so that it makes sense to those you are helping follow Jesus.

TABLE DISCUSSION: Read **Acts 10:34-43** at your table. How did Peter arrange his talk in such a way that made sense to those who heard it? Imagine if the content of this talk was random – how would it be less effective?

HOW TO DO ARRANGEMENT

SIMPLE RULE: follow the Flow & Structure of the Text – don't get creative but rather to the best of your ability, follow the flow of the Biblical text.

Since God's Word is written in an orderly fashion– *most of the time* – sticking with the flow of the Word is the best way to go.

FOR INSTANCE:

#1: Once you've discovered the Main Argument of your passage – you can simply walk through the passage showing how each piece of the puzzle fits into the whole (i.e. how it explains the Main Argument).

#2: Once you've discovered the Main Argument of the passage – you could show the significant themes or moves of the text – demonstrating how they reinforce the Main Argument.

#3: Once you've discovered the Main Argument of the passage – you can trace the logical flow of the Word showing how the Main Argument is quite literally flowing from the Word.

RULE OF THUMB: Don't get slick or cute. Don't try to be impressive.

The power is in the Word being faithfully shared.

Your ultimate goal is to rightly handle the Word of Truth

God has promised to work through His all-sufficient Word



A WORD OF CAUTION ON ARRANGEMENT: Some of you love getting lost in the details – you’ve got main points, sub points, and sub-sub points. You think that good Bible teaching is bringing your entire dump truck of exegetical nuggets and dumping them on your disciplee or small group. This might help you to get clarity in the text when studying, but such details as you teach the Word to others will not bring clarity but confusion. We must have organization, but the organization will best serve others when it is simple and clear.

COAT HANGERS: Growing up back east – if you walked into a home and there was no coat hanger by the door, the coats would simply pile up on the floor. Good teaching of God’s Word should not be like a pile of coats on the floor. Good Bible teaching should provide clear *coat hangers* to help organize what’s being said. Arrangement is simply a way for those listening to hold onto your main argument and follow you through the text – it helps makes sense of the truth you are sharing from the Word.

PRINCIPLE TO REMEMBER: Your arrangement of the Word should bring clarity to the those you are discipling not confusion.

WORD TO THE WISE: Be humble enough to ask a trusted brother or sister to look over your Word-work or to give you feedback about how you did sharing the Word. Ask them specifically if the Main Argument was clear and if your arrangement helped to clarify the Main Argument or if it muddled the Main Argument. How other people hear you is a far more honest assessment than how you hear yourself. And since we are all committed to making progress in the Word and in the making of disciples, such feedback should be humbly received!

TABLE DISCUSSION: Discuss what the significant moves or breaks of the text in Ephesians 4:17-24? How might this flow affect your arrangement when teaching this passage to someone else?

WHY ADORNMENT

Carefully laboring to communicate the Word in such a way that draws in those who are listening and connects the Word with a particular audience is called adornment.

A FEW RULES FOR ADORNMENT

EXPLAIN – ILLUSTRATE – APPLY: As you work through the text and as you think about those whom God has put before you to help follow Jesus, be thinking about



how you are going to **explain** the Word, **illustrating** the Word, and **applying** the Word. Once you've done that, move on to the next portion of the text – rinse & repeat!

There is no reason to get slick or crafty when explaining, illustrating, and applying the Word. Remember Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, he moved simply from truth, to illustration, to application in a single sentence (**Matthew 6:25-26**).

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: Don't teach to the audience you wish to have, teach the Word to the audience God has given you.

Like every teacher or disciple maker in the Bible – they crafted the message for a particular audience (not a global audience or a generic audience). So we must preach and teach to our specific audience (which requires us to know our people...the real, heart stuff of our people).

EDIT RUTHLESSLY: Be willing to cut out anything and everything that doesn't clearly help you communicate the Main Argument of the text. Be willing to edit out even the things that may have ministered to you most in your preparation process – if they don't explicitly serve the main argument of the text. Again – be willing to cut out everything that is not directly supporting the main argument of the text (the goal of teaching the Word is not to show how many pearls you found but to clearly communicate the Spirit-inspired, Main-Argument of the text).

LESS IS MORE: Explain the Text. Demonstrate why the main argument is the main argument in the text and is good for all people today (especially those you are discipling). Call for faith-filled responses with eyes fixed on Jesus. Succinct content with clarity is always better than greater content with confusion.

DON'T ASSUME INTRODUCTIONS OR CONCLUSIONS: Even in a small group setting – prayerfully craft an introduction that invites those listening in. Draw in those listening as to why they should listen and where the Word is going. Prayerfully craft a conclusion that is more than “today we've seen that...” – actually do the hard work of making sure that the arrow hits the bulls eye in your conclusion. Do careful work so that the heart is pierced by the Truth.

REMEMBER: Making disciples is more than just passing along information. It is more than informing people what the Bible is all about. If making disciples is anything – it is Word-saturated persuasion through the Truth rightly studied, carefully communicated, and rightly applied to the heart of the particular audience God has put before you.



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

#1: Using our primary text for Course 2 – Ephesians 4:17-24 – how might God want you to persuade a fellow Christian with this text?

SMALL GROUP GUIDE: We've done a lot of work in Ephesians 4 and most people have already submitted their finals. Don't spend too much time on this question, but as a group try to work the Spirit-inspired applications that are in the Word.

#2: What must be included and what should be left out to effectively persuade others with the Main Argument of Ephesians 4:17-24.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE: Everyone doesn't need to share on this question (as that will get redundant) – but it would be good to talk through how sub-points in the text need to remain sub-points vs. becoming the main point.

#3: How could you effectively teach and apply Ephesians 4:17-24 to a group of non-Christians (this question makes us work out contextualization, persuasion, arrangement, and adornment)?

SMALL GROUP GUIDE: This could take a lot of time so don't get bogged down. Try to simply and clearly explain the main argument from the text. Explaining the main argument from the significant moves in the text. If time, try to work out how to communicate the main argument in a way that is clear and simple (i.e. adornment).

#4: If time – what one thing has been most impactful for your walk with God and the making of disciples in Lead School – Course 2?

SMALL GROUP GUIDE: Ideally – have everyone give one sentence/statement of how Course 2 has impacted them in studying & teaching the Word.