

## Lead School Word Worksheet

One of the tools we use to help anchor the aim and shape of our lesson or sermon to the main point of our text is the Word Worksheet.<sup>1</sup> If this is the first time you have filled out a worksheet like this, this guide is to help you know what we are looking for. But don't feel intimidated if this is unfamiliar, the goal isn't to get the "right answers," but that through the process of wrestling through these questions we will be able to help each other better understand the life-giving message of our text.

The worksheet is designed to help walk us along the exegetical journey: 1) from properly understanding what the point of our passage was to the original recipients thousands of years ago, 2) to what Timeless Gospel Principles that teaches us, and 3) how they apply to our hearers' hearts today. So the questions start with exegesis (correctly interpreting the text), move to theological reflection, and then end with how we plan to preach and teach the text. Our conviction is that the main argument of the lesson/sermon should be clear and from the text. With that in mind, we have explanations for each of the questions on the worksheet to direct your time. Please note, we have included some explanation which can be considered **[Advanced]**, and can be skipped over for anyone new to these concepts.

### 1. What is emphasized in the passage?

This question is at the heart of interpreting the text. The author wrote words in your passage. What was he emphasizing with those words? Why did he say them? This question is based on the fact that we can know the author's purpose by seeing what he emphasized with the words he chose and how he chose to say them.

Once we see what the author was emphasizing in a passage, we are close to understanding the point of the passage. In other words, if we notice that an author keeps repeating a word, he did that for a *reason*. He is trying to make a point! Often, an author doesn't just come out and tell us why he said what he did. Our goal as an interpreter is to be a good detective. We look for clues that help us understand the motive (or intent) of the author.

For example, if we were studying Hebrews 11, we would certainly notice that the whole chapter is about faith. The author repeated the word faith, defined it, and gave examples of it. Obviously, whatever point the author of Hebrews is making, it is related to faith. And we know that because the author emphasized faith with his words. In fact, if we study the book of Hebrews as a whole we would see that the whole point of the book is to encourage his audience to persevere in their faith, because they were tempted to abandon Christ.

So the question next is, how can we tell what an author is emphasizing? This is one of the key skills we want to hone and develop as a good detective. There is not a magical formula, but there are some important clues that we always want to look for.

- A. **Structure.** Often the structure of a passage will help reveal what the author is emphasizing. (See the next question for more details)

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<sup>1</sup> We have been helped by the ministry of the Charles Simeon Trust and our worksheet is based off of theirs, although the explanations are ours.

- B. **A key word or concept.** There are four primary ways to know that a word or concept is significant in a given passage:
- A repeated word or concept in the text. If a word is repeated multiple times in a passage, it is very likely something the author is emphasizing. But also note that an author may repeat a concept using multiple different words. You could also have repetition of grammatical constructs (for example if every *verb* in your passage is a command or in the future tense) to emphasize something. So be sure to **note all repetition** in your passage.
  - A key word or concept throughout the rest of the book. Even if a word isn't repeated in a passage, it may be significant elsewhere in the book, and the author's use in a given text is bringing in this important concept from elsewhere.
  - A key word or concept in prior biblical revelation. For example, the words covenant, faith, grace, salvation, justice, sanctify and many more are significant biblical concepts that are defined as Scripture unfolds, and so they *could* be emphatic if your author includes them in a given passage.
  - A rare word. A word may be emphatic because it's used so infrequently it stands out.
- C. **Summary (or overview) statements.** Sometimes an author will give a conclusion that sums up the whole point he was making. Or conversely, an author can tell you in advance what he is going to say in an overview or introductory statement. While technically a summary or overview statement could be anywhere in a passage, they usually will be at the beginning or end of a passage, so always check the beginning and end of a passage. Also, sometimes you won't find a whole summary or introductory *statement*, but you will find the key word or concept of the passage at the beginning or end of the passage (ie. a summary or overview *word*).
- D. **The climax of a story or argument.** If we are in a narrative, the climax where the tension is the highest in the story, may often reveal the key issue or main emphasis in the story. Or in an argument, the conclusion or climax of the argument often reveals the main emphasis of the author. What is at stake in a narrative? Or in an argument, what is the author arguing for?
- E. **Narrator interjection.** If your passage is a narrative, always be looking for the voice of the narrator. That will often give God's perspective on a set of events. Background information given by the narrator can also help us understand what the author wants us to know before those facts are revealed in the story.
- F. **[Advanced] Grammar.** Sometimes the author can emphasize a point through various aspects of grammar. Anything that isn't normal will stand out as emphatic.
- A rhetorical question can be used for emphasis
  - Commands often stand out as significant
  - The author can foreground or background different verbs by using different verb tenses or moods
  - An author can change the normal word order of a sentence to emphasize something ('fronting' being the most common example)
  - The main verb is the most significant verb in a sentence and other phrases, modifiers, or participles depend on it
- G. **Other.** This list isn't exhaustive! If something *stands out* for any reason, it could be something the author is emphasizing. Communication is wonderfully beautiful and complex, and good authors can be very creative in getting their point across!

## 2. How is this passage structured?

### A. Overview

The structure of a passage is how the author has organized their material. While some passages are more structured than others, we always want to understand the flow of thought of the author reflected in how he organized his writing. To find how a passage is organized we look to see if the passage can be broken down into sub-sections that are distinct from one another. That means that each sub-section of our passage will have a slightly different but related point to the other sub-sections.

Besides topic changes, there can also be other changes (scene changes in narrative, another reason in an argument, a change of tone, text type, speaker, person, a new command, etc.) that signal a new section or sub-section. There can also be connecting words (especially certain conjunctions, pronouns, and referring words) that tie a section together, and words that set it apart from what came before or what comes after (also especially certain conjunctions).

**We know that we have the proper structure of a passage when we see how each part offers a unique contribution to the passage it is in, being distinct from the other parts, yet still relating to them.**

As with any study of Scripture, read and reread your passage to seek to understand what the author is saying and how they organized it. Finding the structure of a passage can often be one of the most difficult aspects of interpreting a passage. So do your best to find the structure, but also remember to enjoy the journey, and this will be something we all continue to grow and sharpen one another in!

### B. [Advanced] Structure of Text Types

There are three primary types of texts, and since they are different we will look at some specific strategies for discerning structure for each type separately.

#### 1. Narrative

One of the key ways to discern the structure of a narrative is to look for scene changes. There is a scene change when the people involved in the narrative, the time, or the location in the story changes. Typically, each scene is its own section in a narrative. Additionally, when analyzing the structure of narrative it is helpful to look at the plot arc of the story. A typical plot arc involves 1) The background (exposition): This usually introduces you to the characters and the setting. 2) The Initial Incident: This introduces us to the first conflict or problem facing the protagonist. 3) Rising Action: As the story progresses, typically suspense or tension is added that lead to the climax. 4) The Climax: This is the point of highest tension and suspense and is the turning point for the protagonist. 5) Falling Action: Events take place that move towards the solution. 6) The Resolution: The conflict is resolved and we discover whether the protagonist achieved their goal or not. 7) Tying things up: All the loose ends are explained so that the story is satisfying to the reader. Note that sometimes an author will purposefully leave out one or more of these elements for various reasons.

Note that there can be multiple plot arcs going on in a story at the same time. For example within the larger story, there can be another smaller problem or conflict that arises and is resolved. Stories are complex, but this basic pattern holds for most stories. If we properly identify a plot arc within a narrative, we know that it forms a section of the story. Once we have identified a plot arc, we want to pay close attention to the issue at stake in the climax. Often the climax is where we find the key point of the story.

Additionally, there are other tools that can help us identify the organization or structure of narratives. We can look for introductions or conclusions, background information, conjunctions or other connecting statements, as well as repeated words that tie sections together to help us note where one section ends and another begins.

## 2. Discourse

A discourse is a speech or letter where an author is directly addressing his audience. Usually a discourse will be an argument of some sort to the hearer, and thus tracing the logic of the argument is absolutely key to understanding discourse. Often in an argument, an author will be making a point, and will seek to prove that point by establishing various sub-points that support the main point. So when breaking down the structure of a discourse, we often want to seek to identify what the point and subpoints of the argument are.

There are various tools that can be used to seek to identify the main point and sub points. First of all, simply read and reread the argument over and over until the argument actually makes sense to you. That will be very helpful to understand what the author is trying to prove and how he is trying to prove it. Next, look for conjunctions (ie. and, but, now, therefore, because, so that, etc.) which are the glue that tie arguments together. There can be conjunctions that look back and others that look forward, and some will tie things together in a single argument, and others will bridge one argument to the next. So take special note of all the conjunctions. Lastly, as with any structure, we are looking for the key words or ideas that tie a section together, and that is no different in an argument. Each sub-point in an argument will be seeking to establish a slightly different point, and the words that the author uses will reflect that difference.

## 3. Poetry

Poetry is a highly stylized form of writing characterized by terseness (brevity), and picturesque language. In poetry the writing is broken up into lines. These lines will typically have a similar length. Each line will typically be broken up into two or three parts. Often, there will be some form of parallelism involved (ie. each part of the line says something similar, or opposite each other). Noting this parallelism is essential for interpreting Hebrew poetry because the terseness of the style makes individual statements more ambiguous, but the parallelism helps with clarity because lines will usually mutually define and limit each other, or otherwise clarify what is meant.

Poetic lines are then organized into stanzas. Often, our English Bibles will denote stanzas by setting them apart (putting space between them). That can be a good guide to get us started, but note that often different versions or commentaries will disagree on how to divide the stanzas and so we always want to confirm this structure by doing our own work. Some poems will be highly structured by having multiple stanzas that all have the same number of lines. Others will have stanzas of different lengths. When trying to determine where one stanza stops and another begins, use the same techniques mentioned earlier. Do you see a change in topic between one stanza and the next? Are there other grammatical or stylistic changes that would set one stanza apart from another?

### C. **[Advanced]** Example

Let's say you were preaching through Luke. When you came to break down Luke 6, you could see that Luke 6:20-49 is a distinct section. We know it is a distinct section because it stands together and is unified by being a single sermon (a topic change from what comes before and after, and also a text type change from what comes before and after). This sermon has three distinct sections. We can see that each major section of the sermon is distinct because it has a unified theme of its own. For example 20-26 is a unit because it gives the values of Jesus' disciples. 27-38 is distinct because it is full of commands, it has a transitionary phrase "But I say to you who hear," and it is unified around the theme of loving our enemies that begins and ends the section. Lastly, 39-49 is distinct it unified in the point of putting Jesus' Words into practice, and it also has another transitional phrase setting it apart, "And he also spoke a parable to them." Notice how each section has a distinct emphasis that unifies it, and that they are also all related (they are in a larger section together).

Each of these sections can be further broken down. For example, 20-26 can be broken down into the blessings (20-23) and woes (24-26). Both the blessings and woes communicate Jesus' values, but one positively, and one negatively. 27-38 can be broken down into 27-31, the overall command of how to love, 32-36, the motivation of how to love, 37-38, the great obstacle to love. Once again notice how each section has a distinct emphasis, and yet is related to each other. Finally, the section of 39-49 can be broken down into several parables which each have a similar point of putting God's Word into practice (39-40, 41-42, 43-45, 46-49).

#### The Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-49)

1. The Kingdom Values of Jesus' Disciples (20-26)
  - a. Blessings for Living for God's kingdom (20-23)
  - b. Woes for Living for this world (24-26)
- a. Living out Kingdom Values results in Merciful Love (27-38)
  - a. The Command to Love our Enemies (27-31)
  - b. The Motivation to Love our Enemies (32-36)
  - c. The Obstacle to Loving our Enemies (37-38)
- b. The Importance of Living out Jesus' Words and Values (39-49)
  - a. Disciples Follow and become like their teacher (39-40)
  - b. Disciples Embody values personally first (41-42)
  - c. Disciples Bear fruit from the heart (43-45)
  - d. Disciples Hear and Act upon Jesus' Words (46-49)

**[Advanced]** One final note on structure. When we are talking about structure here, we are talking about how multiple sentences are grouped together into paragraphs and sections. There is also the structure of individual sentences, but that gets into sentence diagramming and grammar which is beyond the scope of what we are doing at the Word-Workshop. So it may be helpful to keep in mind that when we are talking about structure we are talking about how multiple sentences are grouped together into various sections.

### 3. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?

Context is always vital in understanding the meaning of a passage. No passage is isolated from its context. There are four layers of context that we specifically want to investigate to help us fully understand the setting of our passage.

#### A. General Context

The General Context includes the author, the recipients, and the setting and reason for writing. So for example, the Torah was written by Moses, to the second generation of Israelites who were about to enter the Promised Land (after their parents died in the wilderness). The Torah was written to encourage Israel about the faithfulness of their God and their identity and purpose as His children so that they would trust Him. As they trust Him they would keep His covenant and conquer the promised land to live out His purpose for them. But this purpose becomes more clear once we have identified who the book was actually written to.

The general context can usually be gleaned by reading through the book itself and looking for information about the recipients. Sometimes you can find information about the general context in other places in the Bible as well. A good study Bible should summarize this information for you as well in their introduction to each book of the Bible.

#### B. Literary Context

The Literary Context is the material within the composition your passage is in. A composition is defined as everything written by an author to an audience at a given time and setting (ie. has the same General Context). Sometimes a single composition includes more than one book of the Bible (The Torah, possibly 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles), and sometimes a composition is less than all the material in a given book (ie. each Psalm is an individual composition). But even though letters like 1st and 2nd Corinthians, or 1st and 2nd Timothy have the same author and audience, they were written on different occasions and so are separate compositions. The most relevant Literary Context is usually the sections immediately before and after your passage. The Literary Context is always important because each passage fulfills a purpose in the flow of thought of the composition, and we want to understand how each passage fits within that purpose to understand it fully.

Although the immediately preceding and following passages are usually the most relevant because they will most directly bear on the argument or logic of your passage, you should also be aware of any major themes that run through the entire book and are found in your passage. So search any key words in your passage and see how they are developed throughout the book as a whole.

#### C. Biblical Context

The Biblical Context is how your passage is situated within the unfolding story of Scripture. With the Biblical Context we are looking for connections between our passage and other passages which came **before** in Biblical revelation. Obviously, any later biblical revelation wasn't in the author's mind when he wrote and so doesn't affect its intended *meaning*. We are here looking for context which affects its meaning, and so relevant connections are ones the author would **reasonably expect his audience to make**. We specifically are looking for quotes of earlier passages, or references to earlier events or concepts. For example, allusions or direct references to the Exodus are often significant. We can also include biblical concepts (like the Abrahamic, Davidic, Mosaic, or New covenant, Son of David, etc.) which developed as Scripture unfolded. But be careful not to assume the original audience knew more (or less) than they did.

## D. Historical/Cultural Context

The Historical Context is what was going on in history at the time your passage was written **that is relevant** to the interpretation of your passage. Likewise, the Cultural Context is all of the **relevant** customs, practices, and norms of the people to whom this passage was written, especially when they are different from ones today. For example, in Jesus' day they often ate sitting/laying on the floor, and this is helpful to understand how John could be laying on Jesus' chest during the Last Supper.

While the Historical and Cultural Contexts are important and useful, we also need to beware of what is called "Mirror Reading." This is an error where the assumed Historical or Cultural Context is used to *override* the clear meaning of the text. We must always remember that the meaning of the text is found primarily in the words of the text itself. We should always be wary of when a supposed context changes the apparent surface meaning of the actual words. The context should **clarify** the text, not eliminate the text. In other words, if the alleged context doesn't make the meaning of the text more clear, it probably isn't the correct or relevant background to the text.

## 4. What is the main point the author is arguing to *his audience*?

This is where we seek to summarize the main argument of our passage. Based on all the work you have done so far, how would you summarize the whole passage into a single clear sentence? As has been said, if you are able to explain a complex concept to a five year old, then you really understand it. It is the same with passages of Scripture. Until you are able to simply summarize the whole passage into a single clear sentence, you don't fully understand it. So we want to wrestle with a passage until we can really boil it down to its most basic parts.

**[Advanced]** Ideally, our single sentence not only summarizes the passage into its most basic message, but also shows how the rest of the passage fits into that idea and relates to it. For example, if summarizing Genesis 1, we could definitely boil it down to, "God created." But that doesn't tell us how the rest of the chapter fits into that idea. A better summary of Genesis 1 would be along the lines of, "**God created** man to rule over His good creation for Him." This sentence shows us that yes, 'God created' is the main point of the chapter. But this sentence also shows how the rest of the chapter fits into and connects to that point.

## 5. How is the argument of this passage tied to the purpose of the book as a whole?

### A. From main argument to intended effect

Once we understand the main argument of our passage, we want to wrestle with how the author intends that argument to affect his hearers. What is he trying to accomplish in their hearts and lives? Going from the main argument of a passage to its intended purpose will involve understanding the book as a whole. Why did the author write this book in the first place and how does this passage advance that goal? Who is he writing to and why? It's not until we understand why the book as a whole is written that we can see how our section ties into that overall purpose. If we really trust the Biblical authors, we will sit in the author's intent until we see how he meant our passage to transform the people to whom he wrote. *Trust the process.*

It can be daunting at first to try to understand the purpose of a whole book of the Bible. While some books have an explicit purpose statement (John 20:31) that makes it easy for us to understand why the book was written, many books do not. Especially when we are tackling a large book for the first time (Isaiah!), it can be difficult to get our minds around how every part of the book ties together into the overall purpose of the book. But we aren't asking you to start from scratch. You can read good commentaries, or introductions in a study Bible to try to understand the setting and purpose of the book as a whole. Then as you read and re-read your book, if you are carefully looking out for it, you will begin to see how all the statements in the book tie together to its overall purpose. Remember that the purpose of each book in the Bible always aims at heart transformation, and so it is this step of fitting a passage into the purpose of the book as a whole that keeps us from moralizing commands without understanding the gospel connections.

The better we understand the purpose of the book as a whole, the better we will see how each passage fits into that overall purpose. And the better we understand each individual passage, the more we will refine your understanding of the purpose of the book as a whole. Therefore, it really is a cyclical process where we are constantly refining our understanding of the book as a whole, and that understanding helps us better to understand individual passages. We need to constantly zoom in and look at individual trees, and then zoom out and look at the forest as a whole. The more we do this, the more we see the whole picture and how it all fits together.

## B. Examples

Looking at John 6:1-15, the main argument of the passage is that the sign (John 6:14) Jesus performed points to the fact that He is the Son of God. But what is the intended effect of that truth? When we connect this passage to the purpose of the book we see that the intended effect of that truth is that the readers would believe in Jesus (John 20:31).

Or going back to the example of Genesis 1, we see that the main point is that “**God created** man to rule over His good creation for Him.” That’s clearly the main argument of the chapter. But so what? What does Moses intend for Israel to do with that truth? Note that in Genesis 1, there is nothing explicit about the purpose of these truths. We really need to wrestle with the purpose of the Torah to see how Genesis 1 fits into that purpose. And in the case of the Torah, Moses wants us to see how good God is so we will trust Him. He wants us to see the authority of God’s Word so we will trust and obey it. He wants us to see our identity as made in His image to rule so that we will embrace ruling for Him instead of ruling for ourselves, once again, so we will trust and obey Him. Everything in this chapter fits into the overall purpose of the Torah. So we don’t want to miss the point of Genesis 1 is to encourage Israel to trust in their good God and embrace their identity as His representatives.

## C. **[Advanced]** Note the Tone of the Text

Along with understanding the intent of the text, we also want to take note of its tone. How is the author seeking to accomplish this goal? For example, the author could be seeking to preserve the faith of his audience, but is he seeking to achieve that goal through encouraging or warning them? A biblical author could use either of these methods to seek to achieve that goal, but if we are going to teach our passage faithfully, we usually want to employ the same method as the author when we preach. However, if our text is a rebuke but our audience isn’t in defiant sin like the original audience, it can be valid for us to change the tone and not rebuke our hearers. But we want to be aware of the tone of our text, and lessons/sermons almost always land best when we use the same tone as the original author.



## 6. What Timeless Gospel Principles is this passage teaching and how does this passage tie into God's Gospel Story (His character, promises, plan, types, and themes)?

### A. What are the Timeless Gospel Principles?

After we understand the main argument the author was making to his recipients and how he intended that argument to transform his hearers, we need to reflect and meditate on that argument until we understand the Timeless Gospel Principles behind it. By a gospel principle, we mean a principle that isn't just pragmatic or moralistic ("be a good person," "do this or that," "this will make your life easier"), but points to faith in God ("God is good and worth trusting," "We should love because He first loved us," etc.).

When seeking to derive the Timeless Gospel Principle from a passage, we are often seeking to understand what a passage teaches us about God, His plan and promises, and ourselves. Ultimately, all of the Bible is theological, and theology is practical. Often the Bible is seeking to change our worldview, not just our actions directly. As we see and think about the world as God does, we will better live as God's representatives in it. Remember that the theology of the Bible is always meant to affect our hearts, and so meditate on what heart change the author is going for by faith.

### B. Example

So for example, Haggai 1 was written to encourage and exhort Israel to prioritize working on God's temple over their own personal affairs. Haggai challenges the people that they were making nice houses for themselves (Hag. 1:4) and were busy running about their own house (Hag. 1:9), but were putting off working on God's temple (Hag. 1:2). Obviously, any application today isn't going to involve building the temple. But after reflecting, we can generalize this exhortation to the principle that God is so glorious He wants our good in prioritizing Him and His worship (emphasized throughout Haggai) over our own affairs. God is with us when we seek His glory above all else. Now we have a Timeless Gospel Principle that applies today in a multitude of different contexts.

### C. How does this passage tie into God's Gospel Story?

It is often necessary to understand how our passage ties into God's bigger gospel story which ultimately culminates in Christ. As an obvious example, if we were teaching through Leviticus, the important truths that book teaches about sacrifice and atonement ultimately culminate in Christ, the perfect substitutionary atonement. Many passages about God's future kingdom will culminate in Christ's second coming. Especially in the Old Testament, many of the passages are meant to define or illustrate key concepts like sin and selfishness, grace and forgiveness, faith and faithfulness, etc., which are essential to understand the gospel. So it is often important to show how these passages tie into the gospel story so people understand the big picture of how everything culminates in Christ.

## D. Beware of cheap (false) connections to Jesus or the Cross

While it is true that every passage in Scripture does tie into God's bigger story in some way of which Jesus is the climax, some passages are more removed from the cross than others. Because of this, it actually could be distracting from the point of your passage to make a direct connection to the cross. For example, the main emphasis in Genesis 1 is on the goodness and sovereignty of God, and our identity as His image bearers. The point is that we should trust God because He is good, submit to His Word which has authority, and live out our identity as rulers who represent Him. Certainly Jesus is the ultimate example of a man who lived out that identity, but does the cross itself tie directly into that point? Connecting to Jesus' sacrificial death would probably be a confusing connection. People could get confused and you lose credibility if you unintentionally communicate that the cross is in Genesis 1.

We believe that if you stick to the main argument of the author, and think carefully about what theology he is teaching and how that fits into the gospel story, those Timeless Gospel Principles will be sufficient for true life transformation. Furthermore, some texts focus more on the Father or the Spirit than the Son, and as Trinitarians, we don't want to undervalue these members of the Godhead and make every sermon solely about Jesus. That flatlines the beautifully complex melodic line of Scripture. So we do want to help people understand how every passage fits into God's bigger gospel story, but we don't want to make connections that are so remote that people can't see the connection for themselves.

## 7. What is the main point you will argue to *your audience*?

Your main point should be directly related to the main point the biblical author was making to his audience. But your audience is different than his, and so you need to bridge the gap and make your argument relevant and life giving to your audience. While it is easy for us as teachers and preachers to want to communicate so much (the Bible is so full of truth), we encourage you to be laser focused on a single main argument. Everything in your sermon should relate to and argue for your main argument.

One of the primary goals of preaching is to show your audience how the main point of your sermon comes from the main point of the text. That really is the central argument of the sermon, arguing for what the audience should think or do in light of what God says. So all good preaching is full of explanation and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2, "preach the Word... *with great patience and instruction*"). The goal in preaching is for the peoples' faith to rest on God which comes from His Word (1 Cor. 2:5; Rom. 1:5; 10:17). We want people to live a life of faith and integrity because of conviction in God's Word (1 Tim. 1:5).

Remember that every text of Scripture is aiming for heart transformation, and so wrestle with your text until you understand what heart transformation the author is going for in your text. That heart transformation should be at the center of the main point you are arguing to your audience. On the one hand we want to beware of a main point that is merely intellectual, and on the other hand we want to avoid a main point that calls people to action that isn't rooted in the text.

## 8. What applications will you make?

An application is something the listeners should do with the sermon. We don't want our hearers to come away from hearing us preach God's Word and merely have an intellectual knowledge of the Bible. The Bible was written to transform. But also keep in mind that some passages are more aimed at transforming our worldview and thinking rather than calling us to a particular action. But in that case we would want to help our hearers understand how that change in thinking should affect their lives practically by faith.

Keep in mind that in Scripture, some passages are *directly* applicable and other passages are *indirectly* applicable. What this means is that some applications have the weight and authority of Scripture behind them (you must), and others have a multitude of valid possible applications (you could). We need to be very careful not to go beyond what the Scripture commands in laying a burden on God's people and their consciences.

An example of a direct application is when Paul commands the Corinthians not to be sexually immoral because they were bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:18-20). We can preach with the authority of God Himself that God's people must not be sexually immoral because Christ bought them. This is a direct application because our situation is the same as the Corinthians. We were bought with a price just as they were, and so Paul's command applies equally to us as it did to them.

As an example of an indirect application, imagine you were preaching on Luke 6:1-13 and that the main point of the passage is that we should be good stewards of God's resources since everything is His. Now that truth is clear in the passage and you can preach the point that we are stewards authoritatively. But how should that truth be applied? There are various applications of how to be a good steward. Maybe being a good steward means not wasting money or time playing video games. It could mean not spending lots of money on a fancy car or house. But these applications are not directly from the text, and so it would be an overreach of pastoral authority to preach these applications as if the text demanded to be applied in that way. Remember, the goal is always for God's people to live by faith, and to do what they do because they are convinced it is what God wants. So stay close to the text in application.

## 9. What is your talk title and your teaching outline?

How do you briefly summarize the main argument of your teaching in a memorable way? And then, how do you seek to unfold and unpack this main argument? A well organized sermon will be easier to follow.

While it is often best for the teaching outline to follow the structure of the passage, this isn't always best. Sometimes for various reasons, it makes sense to break down how you explain the passage in other ways. But as a word of warning, if you choose to organize your sermon differently than the organization of the passage, make sure you have good reason to do so. We have often found that what seemed like a good way to walk through a passage that wasn't in order, only turned out to be confusing. So only deviate from the structure of the passage if you have good and clear reason to do so.

## 10. Final encouragements

If this is your first time working through this or if this is new to you, don't be discouraged! It can seem overwhelming at first, but the more we work through this Word-Worksheet, the better we understand and communicate the life-giving Word. We all want to continue to grow and be sharpened, none of us have arrived. Your five minute presentation won't be judged harshly, but it is a time for helpful feedback as we grow together. So do your best and see you soon!