

5 Easy Steps to Creating Great Sermons

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**Judah Thomas**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Preparing a sermon can be a daunting task. In fact, there are colleges that offer entire courses on how to prepare sermons. Those classes can certainly be helpful, but it does not have to be that complicated. Jesus' sermons were rarely very complex. They were practical, and my goal is to help you create practical and life changing sermons.

Whether you are teaching a group of toddlers, youth or adults the principles of preparing an inspiring sermon are basically the same.

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The main difference is that you need to make it age-relevant for whomever you are teaching. You also need to be aware of the attention span of the age group that you will be teaching so that you keep them interested.

Some people tend to think that kids are too small to learn from the Scripture. As a result, many children's ministries end up being little more than child care with a color page of Noah's Ark. I believe what the Bible says in Isaiah 55:11 that God's Word will always produce fruit.

**Isaiah 55:11[NLT]** *It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.*

It can be helpful to think about preparing a lesson or sermon as if you are preparing a meal. You will have several steps to go through before your meal can be served. First you will need to determine what you will be serving. Then you will need to find good recipes and gather the ingredients. You will then cook the meal and work

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on the presentation and garnishes. Lastly you will serve the food to your guests.

## **STEP 1: PRAYER AND BRAINSTORMING**

In our meal analogy this will be determining what kind of meal you will be serving. Will you serve your guests a casual pizza with hot wings? You could serve them a meal from your family's heritage. Or perhaps you can do an elegant four-course meal with silver place settings. It really doesn't matter, but you need to have a basic direction. Serving pizza with caviar might be a little bit odd.

In the same way you will need to pray and brainstorm about the direction your lesson will take. You will also need to consider the

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following:

- What age group you will be teaching?
- Will this be specific to a certain gender, like a women's retreat?
- Is this a small group study or will you be speaking in front of thousands?
- Will you share about a specific topic in the Bible?
- Would you rather base the sermon off of a particular verse, chapter or book in the Bible?

One of the most important things to realize when you are preparing a sermon, lesson or Bible study is that the goal is to speak about the topics that God wants you to speak on. You may feel anxious over this, but as Philippians 4:6 says, don't worry about it. Pray about it!

**Philippians 4:6-7 [NLT]** *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. [7] Then you*

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*will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

I encourage you to take some time to pray and ask God what He would like you to speak about. You may already have an idea about it, but let God confirm that through your time of prayer.

It may be helpful to go outside and take a walk, or just sit somewhere and listen. Often times our prayers are filled with far too much talking and not nearly enough listening.

You should also spend some time casually reading the Bible expecting God to point something out to you. If you are unsure what to read then flip over to Proverbs because almost every proverb can be a good launching pad for a great sermon.

It is a good idea to keep a pad and pencil or note-taking app with you so that you can jot down thoughts or any verses as you feel the Spirit leading you. Do not try to filter your thoughts at this point.



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Just write down any ideas that you may have.

By this time you may already have a very strong feeling about the direction that God wants you to take. If not, then review your list as you ask him for his wisdom and insight. Through this process you will surely end up with at least one good topic to begin exploring.

Throughout this entire sermon preparation process always be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to redirect you or fine-tune the direction that you are going. Being sensitive to the Lord's leading is the most important part of any time of study.

## **STEP 2: STUDY**

Now is the time to dig deeper. This is where we begin finding the recipes for all of the dishes we will be serving. It's time to start gathering our ingredients and make sure that we have everything that we need.

Hopefully by this point you have narrowed down to a specific topic or passage of Scripture that you will be studying. If you have not narrowed it down, go ahead and do so, or at the very least just take one of the topics or verses you have come up with and use that to

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get you going.

If for some reason you are going in the wrong direction the Holy Spirit will guide you to where you need to be. Numerous times I have been studying a certain topic and then that topic inspires me in a totally new direction. That's okay. Be flexible and willing to let that happen.

The first thing that you should do is see what the Bible says about the topic or verse you have decided to study. Many people will jump straight into reading commentaries but I highly discourage that.

A commentary is simply someone else writing their thoughts and interpretations about a particular verse. It can be helpful to reference these later on in the process, but you don't want them to influence you just yet. Let God's Word alone do the speaking to you.

There are numerous ways to study the Bible, and I will not go into

them all right here. As I mentioned before, there are complete college level courses about how to prepare a sermon and how to study the Bible.

### **Finding Bible Verses**

I will teach you a simple way that works. If you know how to go deeper on your own, then go for it. If you have a method that works better for you, that is fine. I want to provide a spring-board for your study. My goal is to provide you with a method that does not require a Masters in Divinity to understand.

Let us just pretend that we will be preparing a lesson on thankfulness. There are many ways to find everything that the Bible has to say about this topic, but the quickest and easiest is to use a resource called [OpenBible](#).


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[OpenBible.info](#) [Geocoding](#) [Topical Bible](#) [Realtime Bible Search](#) [Labs](#) [Blog](#)

# OpenBible.info

Remix Bible data

## Bible Geocoding



[Every identifiable place](#) in the Bible. [With photos](#).

## Topical Bible

A [web 2.0 topical Bible mashup](#). Interested in what the Bible says about a topic? Try it out and make it better.

## Realtime Bible Verse Search

Search for [references to Bible verses on Twitter and Facebook](#). Updated in almost real time.

## Labs

OpenBible is an amazing tool for quickly finding the most relevant Scripture references on practically any topic you can imagine. We will begin by clicking on the menu item called “Topical Bible.”

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This will bring you to a page that looks like this:

OpenBible.info   [Geocoding](#)   [Topical Bible](#)   [Realtime Bible Search](#)   [Labs](#)   [Blog](#)

# Topical Bible

[A](#) · [B](#) · [C](#) · [D](#) · [E](#) · [F](#) · [G](#) · [H](#) · [I](#) · [J](#) · [K](#) · [L](#) · [M](#) · [N](#) · [O](#) · [P](#) · [Q](#) · [R](#) · [S](#) · [T](#) · [U](#) · [V](#) · [W](#) · [Y](#) · [Z](#)



## What Does the Bible Say About...

? Find Out

 Like { 2.6k }  Tweet { 170 }  +1 { 137 }



## About This Topical Bible

This Bible is a mashup of the [Yahoo!](#) and [ESV Bible](#) web services. It searches the Internet for the topics that in

Vote for or suggest verses that you think are especially relevant for a topic. Help improve it.

Searching for a word will automatically add it.

Now type in the topic you would like to search or if you prefer you can use the alphabetical listing at the top. For this example we will be looking up "thankfulness." If for some reason your search did not bring up many verses you can use a thesaurus to find other similar words such as "gratitude," "gratefulness" and "thanksgiving."

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You will be brought to a page that lists many verse relating to the topic you are studying. The great thing about this site is that people can actually vote whether or not a verse is helpful for that specific topic. So instead of wading through possibly hundreds of verses you will find the most relevant ones at the top.

In our study about “thankfulness” we see that the first verse currently has 114 votes. That doesn't mean I have to use it, but it is certainly helpful to know.

[OpenBible.info](#) [Geocoding](#) [Topical Bible](#) [Realtime Bible Search](#) [Labs](#) [Blog](#)

What does the Bible say about  ? [Find Out](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

100 Bible Verses about  

# Thankfulness

[Like](#)  [Tweet](#)  [+1](#)

[Ephesians 5:20](#) ESV / 114 helpful votes  
Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) ESV / 107 helpful votes  
Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

[Psalm 106:1](#) ESV / 63 helpful votes  
Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

[Psalm 100:4](#) ESV / 43 helpful votes  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

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All of these verses are good, and I will now begin to create a document containing any verse or thought that stands out to me. This document can be very rough and I will basically just copy and paste anything of interest into it.

I believe that whenever you use a Bible verse you should make sure that you use it in it's proper context. In other words, you want to read the verses before and after to make sure that this verse is really saying what you think it is saying. The easy way to do that is to just click on the link to the Bible verse which will take us to [BibleGateway](#).



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The screenshot shows the BibleGateway website interface. On the left is a navigation menu with links like Home, Passage Lookup, Keyword Search, Topical Index, Available Versions, Audio Bibles, Additional Resources, Reading Plans, Devotionals, Newsletters, Bible Gateway App, Preferences, Bible Gateway Blog, and Store. The main content area has a search bar where 'Ephesians 5:20' is entered, and a dropdown menu set to 'English Standard Version'. Below the search bar is a banner for 'Tortured for Christ' with the text 'A FREE book that will cost you nothing. A story that nearly cost him everything.' and a 'request your free copy now' button. The search results show 'Ephesians 5:20 (English Standard Version)' with a dropdown menu for the translation. A red arrow points to this dropdown menu. Below the translation dropdown are navigation buttons (back, forward, etc.) and an 'Add parallel' button. The verse text is displayed: '20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,'.

Here are many more tools that you can use, and you can modify the Bible translation that you are using by selecting it in the drop-down menu.

If you click on the button shown in the above illustration, you will be brought to a page that shows you the entire chapter, in this case Ephesians 5. Now you can read the verses surrounding the one you

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are studying or even the entire chapter.

You can also use BibleGateway to research the topics as well, but it will only bring you verses that actually contain the word you are looking for. This can vary greatly depending on what translation you are searching in. For now, let's just stick with OpenBible for topical research.

After spending a little bit of time on these sites you find several verses that interest you. If you feel there are a few specific verses that really stand out to you we can dig a little deeper into them by finding some cross references. Cross references are basically Scripture verses in the Bible that say basically the same thing. This can help you to make sure that your study is Biblically accurate and it will give you more verses to draw from.

The best way to find cross references is to use the "[Bible Cross Reference](#)" section of OpenBible. It can be a little difficult to find, but it is in their "Labs" section. You will be brought to a page that will allow you to enter the verse you are studying.

# Bible Cross References

About 340,000 cross references identify commonalities between different parts of the Bible, events, or people.

## Enter a Bible Verse to Search for Cross References

Find cross references

## Or Start with These Popular Verses

### Old Testament

1. [Jeremiah 29:11](#)
2. [Proverbs 3:5](#)
3. [Proverbs 4:23](#)
4. [Proverbs 3:6](#)

### New Testament

1. [Philippians 4:13](#)
2. [Romans 8:28](#)
3. [John 3:16](#)
4. [Hebrews 11:1](#)

For this example we will enter the verse we are studying which is Ephesians 5:20. We will then be brought to a page which contains a grid of similar verses.

# Ephesians 5:20 Cross References

eph 5:20

[Go to Bible verse](#)

[« Ephesians 5:19](#) | [Ephesians 5:21 »](#) | Compare: [NIV](#), [KJV](#), [NLT](#), [NKJV](#), [NRSV](#), [ESV](#) | [Cross references home](#)

## Ephesians 5:20

giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

## Colossians 3:17

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

## Hebrews 13:15

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

## 2 Thessalonians 1:3

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

## Ephesians 5:4

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

## Psalms 34:1

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away. I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

## 1 Peter 4:11

Helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

From here you will be able to see similar verses in both the New Testament and the Old Testament that say something similar as the verse you are studying. Add any of these relevant verses to your document.

As you are studying a specific verse you may come across an expression or word that you want to dig deeper on. For example we are studying “thankfulness” and our main verse is Ephesians 5:20, but what does that word “thanks” really mean in that verse?

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The only way to really find out is to read it in it's original language.

Don't freak out! This is not difficult.

For this exercise we are going to use the language resources at

[Blue Letter Bible](http://BlueLetterBible.com).

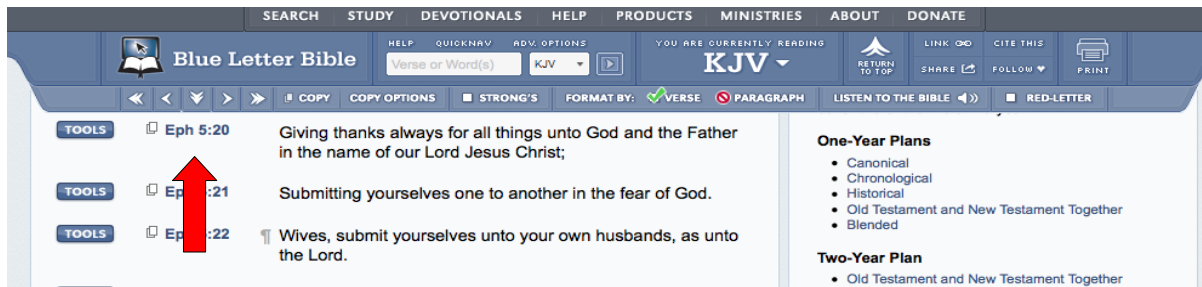
The screenshot shows the Blue Letter Bible website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: SEARCH, STUDY, DEVOTIONALS, HELP, PRODUCTS, MINISTRIES, ABOUT, and DONATE. Below this is a large banner with the site's logo (an open book with a cursor) and the title "Blue Letter Bible". To the right of the logo is a search box with the placeholder "Verse or Word(s)", a dropdown menu set to "KJV", and a green "Search" button. Below the search box are examples: "John 3:16", "Jesus faith love", and "God of my salvation".

Below the banner are two main content areas. On the left, under the heading "New Items", is a video player showing a thumbnail for "ANNOUNCING A NEW COURSE ON THE BLUE LETTER BIBLE INSTITUTE". The video title below the player is "New BLB Institute Course on Worldview Evangelism". On the right, under the heading "Multiple Verse Retrieval", is a text input field with the example "Gen 1:1-15; Rev 3; 4; Jer 21:10". Below the input field are a "KJV" dropdown, a "Retrieve" button, and an "Adv. Options" button. At the bottom right, there is a section titled "ESSAYS For the mind and heart" with a link to "The Story of Adam & Eve Judging Angels".

On their site we will simply enter in the Scripture reference that we

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are studying. You can change the Bible version if you want, but I usually just leave it as KJV. Once you search the verse you will be brought to this page.



You will see a listing of the verses in that chapter. Just click on the one that you are studying. You will then be brought to a page which shows your the verse with all the original words listed.

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Blue Letter Bible

SEARCH STUDY DEVOTIONALS HELP PRODUCTS MINISTRIES ABOUT DONATE

HELP QUICKNAV ADV. OPTIONS YOU ARE CURRENTLY READING KJV

Verse or Word(s) KJV

RETURN TO TOP LINK CITE THIS SHARE FOLLOW PRINT

FORMAT BY: VERSE PARAGRAPH LISTEN TO THE BIBLE RED-LETTER

TOOLS Eph 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

INTERLINEAR BIBLES CROSS-REFS COMMENTARIES DICTIONARIES MISC

Textus Receptus

5:20 εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ

English (KJV) [?]	Strong's	Root Form (Greek)	Parsing
Giving thanks	G2168	εὐχαριστέω <i>eucharisteō</i>	PARSE
always	G562	πάντοτε <i>pantote</i>	
for	G5018	ὑπὲρ <i>hyper</i>	
all things	G3956	πᾶς <i>pas</i>	
unto God	G2316	θεός <i>theos</i>	
and	G2532	καί <i>kai</i>	
the Father	G3962	πατήρ <i>patēr</i>	
in	G1722	ἐν <i>en</i>	
the name	G3686	ὄνομα <i>onoma</i>	
of our	G2257	ἡμῶν <i>hēmōn</i>	
Lord	G2962	κύριος <i>kyrios</i>	
Jesus	G2424	Ἰησοῦς <i>lēsous</i>	
Christ;	G5547	Χριστός <i>Christos</i>	

GNT Morph

5:20 εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ

One-Year Plans

- Canonical
- Chronological
- Historical
- Old Testament and New Testament Together
- Blended

Two-Year Plan

- Old Testament and New Testament Together

Recently Popular Pages

- Bob Hoekstra :: Day By Day By Grace
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon :: Morning and Evening
- Study Resources :: Creeds, Catechisms, and Confessions
- Study Resources :: Cain's Wife
- Study Resources :: Baptist Confession of 1689
- Blue Letter Bible :: About the BLB
- Blue Letter Bible :: Frequently Asked Questions
- Study Resources :: Mormon at Your Door - A Quick Reference Guide
- Study Resources :: The Nicene Creed
- Study Resources :: Six Hours of Eternity

Recently Popular Media

- In the Beginning (Gen 1:1 ) (Ray Stedman)
- Chapter 1 Verse 1 [1990s] (Chuck Missler)
- Real Resolution (Bob Coy)
- Arise and Build (Cheryl Brodersen)
- Jeremiah 46-49 (1979-82 Audio) (Chuck Smith)
- Matthew 21-22:14 (Jon Courson)
- Question and Answer Session (Kent Hovind)
- The Abundant Life! (Margaret Ashmore)
- John 7:1-2 (Dr. J. Vernon McGee)
- New Covenant: a Better Hope (Chuck Missler)

You will see the original words in their original language on the right-hand column and their English translation on the left. You can certainly dig deeper into any word that you want, but for this



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illustration we are just going to look at the word that was translated as "Giving thanks." Simply click on the Strong's number to be brought to the definition.

The screenshot shows the Blue Letter Bible website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for SEARCH, STUDY, DEVOTIONALS, HELP, PRODUCTS, MINISTRIES, ABOUT, and DONATE. Below this is a sub-navigation bar with HELP, QUICKNAV, ADV. OPTIONS, and a KJV dropdown menu. The main content area is titled "Lexicon :: Strong's G2168 - εὐχαριστέω". It displays the word in Greek (εὐχαριστέω), its transliteration (eucharisteō), and its pronunciation (yü-khā-rē-ste'-ō). The part of speech is listed as "verb", and the root word is "From εὐχάριστος (G2170)". The "Dictionary Aids" section includes links to "Vine's Expository Dictionary: View Entry" and "TDNT Reference: 9:407,1298". The "Outline of Biblical Usage" section lists two uses: "I. to be grateful, feel thankful" and "II. give thanks". The "KJV Translation Count" section shows a total of 39x, with a breakdown: "The KJV translates Strong's G2168 in the following manner: give thanks (26x), thank (12x), be thankful (1x)". The "Thayer's Greek Lexicon" section includes a link to "Click Here for the Rest of the Entry". The "Word / Phrase / Strong's Search" section has a search bar with "G2168" entered and a "Search" button. The "Concordance Results Using KJV" section is partially visible. On the right side, there is a "Sponsors" section with an image and text, a "Search Results by Book" section with a grid of buttons for various books (Mat, Mar, Luk, Jhn, Act, Rom, 1Cr, 2Cr, Eph, Phil, Col, 1Th, 2Th, Phm, Rev), and a "BLB Searches" section with search bars for "Search the Bible", "LexiConc", and "Theological FAQs".



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Now you will see what the original word is and the Biblical definition of that word. They also have an audio that teaches you how to pronounce the word if you are interested in doing that. If you scroll further down the page you will also see every other verse in the Bible that uses that exact word.

### Finding Other Resources

Once you have a good grasp on the Bible verses that are going to make up the main course of your meal you may want to start looking for various side-dishes and garnishes. These are stories and illustrations that you may use to help to bring a practical application to your message. We read in Scripture that whenever Jesus taught he used a parable or something creative to help to illustrate his message.

**Mark 4:34 [NLT]** *In fact, in his public ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.*

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Whenever possible it is great to use a personal story or experience to illustrate the point. This makes it far more interesting and practical and is a great way to relate to your audience. Don't be afraid to use stories, especially funny ones, of how you didn't do the right thing or made some mistake.

All too often speakers will only use good stories about their lives and it gives the false impression that they are perfect. Be real with people. Show who you really are. Don't worry, you won't lose any credibility.

Here are a few extra resources that will help you to add some flavor into your lesson. I won't bother outlining how to use each resource as they are pretty self explanatory.

[FreeBibleLessons.net](http://FreeBibleLessons.net) is a site that we produce that provides you with object lessons to teach Biblical truths. Object Lessons are great for kids, but they can also be used very effectively for any age. In fact, whenever I teach any age group I always using a variety

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of object lessons.

[SermonIllustrations.com](http://SermonIllustrations.com) is a great resource of short stories and other illustrations that can add some spice to your sermon. The site doesn't currently have a search feature, but the categories are arranged pretty logically.

[SermonSpice.com](http://SermonSpice.com) is a site that offers creative video clips for church use. This site is not free, but the videos are not usually very expensive.

[BrainyQuote.com](http://BrainyQuote.com) contains a huge database of famous quotes. This is not a Christian site, but there are thousands of great quotes on any topic.

There are dozens more resources out there that will provide you with inspiration. You can find drama scripts, jokes, graphics, magic tricks, games and much more with just a little bit of research.

## **STEP 3: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Here is where you will actually start to cook this meal you have been working so hard on. You have all of the raw ingredients together and now it is time to start assembling it into something that makes sense.

*The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending, then having the two as close together as possible.*  
- George Burns

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I don't think that George Burns is the authority on sermon preparation, but I think he makes a valid point. Make it long enough to get the point across, but short enough to keep everyone interested. My dad, who has been a pastor for close to forty years, always says that it's better to end with them wanting more than to go so long that everyone is wishing you would end.

Every good story has a beginning a middle and an end. This may sound over simplistic but it is a good formula to follow. How does your story start? How does it end? Now how do you connect the two?

If I was going to be speaking about "thankfulness" I would possibly start about by talking about the problem. People tend to take things for granted. We often get caught up in the cares of this life.

I know that I want the end of the talk to inspire people to choose to live thankful lives. I will end with a challenge to only say thankful words for an entire week.

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Now, I have my beginning and my end. I just need to fill out the details in the middle with all of the verses, stories and illustrations I gathered in Step 2. Try to organize it as logically as possible, but don't overthink it. Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

Try to avoid the urge to let your topic get too broad. Imagine that your topic is a large spike that you are trying to drive into a board. Pick the point you are trying to make, in this case living a life of gratitude. Hit that point with a Bible verse. Then hit it again with a story or illustration. Hit it with another Bible verse. Hit it with a joke. Finally drive the point home with a challenge or application that everyone can start today.

*Tell the audience what you're going to say, say it; then tell them what you've said. - Dale Carnegie*

Don't be afraid to repeat your point over and over. Tell them several times. Keep reinforcing the point that you feel God wants you to make. Do you see what I did there?

## **STEP 4: DELIVERING THE MESSAGE**

You are finally in the home stretch. You are getting ready to serve this great meal that you have been working on. Here are a few thoughts on how to make that happen as smoothly as possible.

### **Sermon Notes**

Some people teach entirely from memory, some people use a brief outline, others will use a larger outline with more detailed notes and lastly some will simply read their sermon word-for-word. It's all a

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matter of personal preference.

I tend to use an outline. If I am going to be presenting the message only once I can generally go with a shorter outline and just fill in the blanks as I go along. If I will be teaching it multiple times, as I often do, I will make my outline more detailed so that I can be sure to cover the same things each time.

I also use different SIZES, **colors**, **bolds** and underlines throughout my notes. For example I always indent Scripture references and make them **blue**. It just makes it stand out more to me.

For any additional text in my notes I will usually alternate the colors of each paragraph so that it stands out to me when I glance down to read them. Every one is different, but staring down at a full page of black 12 point font is a quick recipe for me to get totally lost and forget where I am.

Each person has to come up with their own method, so feel free to experiment. Just make sure it is readable. Unless you are planning



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on reading the entire thing out loud, you will want to be able to find your place quickly with just a glance of your eye.

### **Rehearsal**

I don't usually rehearse the entire sermon, although you certainly can if you want. I do usually rehearse my opening and closing lines. I want my opening line to be engaging and I want to know how I am going to end. It is very awkward for an audience as well as yourself if you do not know how to close your sermon and stop talking. I usually try to end on the main point and go to a prayer.

### **Speaking Clearly**

As you give your talk just speak slowly and clearly. There is a tendency to talk too fast if you get nervous. Just take your time and make each word count.

A little bit of silence is okay. Most people will use crutch words like

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“um” and “uh” in their conversations when they are forming a thought. That can be very distracting in public speaking. Try to be aware of those words. If you are tempted to use an “um” just be quiet. Don't say anything. It is far less distracting than going to those crutch words over and over.

## **STEP 5: EVALUTATION**

Most people find it very awkward to watch themselves on video or listen to their voices, but this can be a very helpful tool if you plan to speak more in the future. Try to at least get an audio recording of the lesson that you gave. You can even record it on your phone if you want to. Don't listen to it immediately after unless you need to use the sermon right away.

Give yourself a few days and then listen to the recording and try to take note of things that you did well and things that you didn't do

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so well. This may feel uncomfortable but it will go a long way in helping you to improve your speaking skills in the shortest amount of time.

Ask someone that you trust to give you their feedback on the lesson. Don't ask someone that will just tell you that you did a good job. Look for honest feedback. Sure it feels great for someone to say that you did well, but that doesn't give you anything to improve upon.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Getting the opportunity to teach a group large or small of small children or adults is a great honor and an opportunity to use your gifts to serve the Kingdom of God. Make sure whenever you teach you always bring out practical application and that the lesson ends with something they can use that day to get closer to God.

**2 Timothy 2:15 [NLT]** *Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.*