

## 5 Ways to Preach Better Sermons

One of the ways I prepare for sermons is by constantly collecting content—things like news stories or statistics that might make a good illustration, anecdotes and quotes, and Bible verses based on a common theme.

I usually start collecting this stuff months or even years before I ever write the sermon. This kind of collecting is one of the most underrated habits of great preachers. We can learn from them by always being on the lookout for things that will help us develop future sermons.

I'll give you an example of what I mean. A few years ago, I preached a sermon series on Psalm 23. It turned out to be a great evangelistic series. In fact, 446 people gave their lives to Christ during the seven-week series. But here's the thing: I started collecting material on Psalm 23 back when I was in college! And so when it came time to preach this series, I had a huge file of information to draw on. I'd been thinking about the topics in Psalm 23 for years, so I don't believe it was accidental that God used the series so effectively.

Here are specific things I look for:

### 1. Bible Verses

When I'm preparing a sermon, I always find verses that I can use in other sermons. Maybe I'm studying for a sermon on marriage, but then I find a great verse on parenting. I know that someday I'll preach on parenting, so I file that verse in a folder on parenting. If you do this, it won't take long to develop your own topical concordance of verses. I use verses that I've found during sermon prep and also in my quiet times.

### 2. Quotes and Statistics

Be on the lookout for insightful quotes that might fit into a sermon theme. Great quotes are everywhere. Maybe you'll find one in something you're reading. Maybe you'll get it from a podcast or a video. Statistics work the same way. When you come across these things, save them. It's always easier to save it for later than to try finding it when you're preparing a sermon.

### 3. Books

Part of my research includes searching Amazon for books related to the sermon topic. I want to see what people are writing on the topic of my sermon. I search by keywords related to the sermon theme, and I particularly look at the titles and tables of contents.

You don't have to buy the books, of course. Sometimes I just print out the title and table of contents for later use. Then I can order the book, look for it at the library, or use the table of contents as a guide.

## 4. Articles

Keep looking for newspaper and magazine articles that illustrate what you plan to preach on, even if that's in the future. You might see a story about someone's generosity that'll work great in your next sermon on giving. Or maybe it's an article that talks about problems that people face today, like addictions, loneliness, or fear. If you stay on the lookout for illustrations when you're reading, you'll be surprised at how often you find something—even the very week you need it.

## 5. Testimonial Letters

We get helpful stories or illustrations sent to us all the time, right? They're in emails and letters from people in our congregations. Maybe they give some insight into what you're about to teach. Or maybe they ask questions that a lot of other people are asking. People probably tell you what happened when they first started tithing or how a small group changed their lives. These are great illustrations when you talk about giving or the importance of fellowship.

Collecting this material will give you research right at your fingertips for now and in the future. And it will add to the effectiveness of your sermons.

> [Read more from Rick.](#)

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