

The passage may be from the study of a book or, in fact, even a whole book although in most cases you would need several talks for this. It could be a psalm or a meaningful portion from any place in the Bible but it is an extended portion and you are going to expose its content to the hearers. The possibilities for selection are almost boundless but be certain, no matter what you select, that it is something you can handle satisfactorily in the time allotted. No use planning to give an exposition of John 17 if you are assigned a five minute talk. If one has the opportunity for a continuous ministry or speaking engagement...a book may be outlined and then each section treated expositively and eventually the whole book would be studied.

b. Having read the passage several times (and prayed about it as well) a theme for the passage should become apparent. This theme will state in a simple order the major truth of the passage and will tie together the whole talk as one unit of thinking.

c. Prepare a suitable introduction that will allow those who are listening to know what you are doing and how it will be done. Keep the introduction short, interesting, and enthusiastic.

d. Determine the natural divisions in the passage by a study of the grammar and syntax and the subject matter being treated. If it proves possible, allow the divisions to be the major portions of your outline. Developing the outline in accord with the divisions makes outlining easier and reception by the listeners much easier. Even though we are in an exposition and are going to touch on each verse...the Bible is not written as a collection of random thoughts...there are connectives throughout and the teacher needs to relate. As you move verse by verse, be careful about bringing too much technical matter into the message. Keep things simple as you have a great advantage over the listeners and should make certain they understand you.

e. Select some illustrative material that will help you in applying the passage to your audience. If you are not sure about the gathering or using of illustrations, there are several books that would help. Knights Book of Illustrations is helpful and there are many others. If you have children...lots of illustrations are available if used carefully. Any incident in life or observation of people easily becomes illustrative but must be used tastefully. It is important that the illustration does not take away from the point it is illustrating. I cannot treat this further...it is a special science by itself...but read the sermons in the Bible and see how the illustrations are used.

f. Prepare a conclusion that will challenge the hearers to recall the truth of the passage and to act appropriately in life to what they have heard in this message. Pray much over how you will conclude...it may be the last thing you will ever do!