



Preach Like a Lady



Module 1

Tools of the Trade

Equipping Yourself to Preach & Teach

Unit 1

READING

© 2017 Lori Wagner
AFFIRMING FAITH

8900 Ortonville Road | Clarkston, MI 48348 | www.affirmingfaith.org

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in an electronic system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise except for the personal use of the enrolled student without the prior permission of Affirming Faith.

READING

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:13

NOTES

LESSON 1: THE WHYS & WHATS OF READING FOR MINISTERS

The Word of God is alive and powerful. It's a weapon in warfare. It's truth. It's profitable. It's a lamp. It's perfect. And you are privileged to have the opportunity to know the Word and share it with others.


Christian ministry is a partnership between the natural (you) and the supernatural (God). There are some elements of ministry completely dependant on the Spirit of God, but as a preacher and teacher, you have a responsibility to do your part. You must prepare yourself to rightly divide—so you can rightly declare—the Word. That means disciplining yourself and developing the skills you need—your “tools of the trade.” In this unit we will discuss reading, an indispensable implement for a woman called to *Preach Like a Lady*.

READING THE WORD

A credible pulpit ministry must be carefully and completely grounded in the Word of God. In fact, knowing the Bible is essential for any Christian ministry; and to know it well requires regular Scripture reading. As a believer, you become rooted, built up in God, and established in the faith by what you are taught from the treasure and wisdom hidden in God's Word (See [Col 2:3, 7](#)). As a minister, sharing those treasures with others means reading is a part of your job description. It is not a luxury for if and when you find the time between appointments and other responsibilities. Reading is a requirement, and thankfully, effective reading skills can be nurtured and developed.



⇒ Words are incredibly important and are among a minister's most important vocational tools.



Your “good success” as a preacher depends on your knowledge and adherence to the Word of God (see [Joshua 1:8](#)). The apostle Paul advised the young man he was mentoring in Christian ministry with these words, “Till I come, give attendance, to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim 4:13). The apostle specifically referenced the public reading of Scripture, but he was making a point we must acknowledge and embrace: A Christian minister must regularly interact with the Word of God.

READING BEYOND

President Harry S. Truman said, “Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers.” Through reading you and I grow in ways we will not find in other methods. Through books you have access to great minds, historic events, different cultures, and so much more.

Reading a wide variety of materials will develop **well roundedness** in your knowledge, skills, and abilities—a trait important for ministers who speak to people from varying walks of life, personal experiences, and even different faith traditions.

Read:

- Spiritual classics
- Books on prayer
- Books on preaching
- Books on discipleship
- Books on spiritual growth
- Books on leadership
- Biographies
- Books on biblical studies and theology
- Church history
- Select fiction
- Your Bible!

Those God has called to pulpit ministry have the responsibility to impart **knowledge** that strengthens the church. In fact, the Word not only says God’s people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge, he placed the blame at the feet of his priests who rejected the treasure they had been given—access to the Word of God (see [Hosea 4:6](#)).

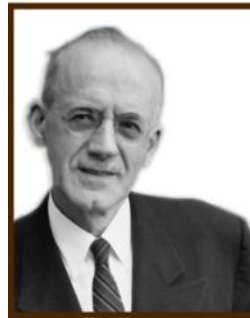
⇒ You have access to knowledge, and you are responsible to fill yourself with it so you can dispense it to others.

On the back of a horse, plodding over mile after mile of countryside, John Wesley read book after book. He read the Bible in many languages and translations. He read scriptural study books, history, poetry, and philosophy. A remnant of his extensive library still remains—books that bear his handwriting inside. If Wesley could do that on the back of a horse, surely you and I could set aside some time each day to read books that educate and provoke us to expand our thinking.

It is true that some of the older works are harder to wade through, but it is also true they can provide insight from a different perspective than we might find in those authored by our contemporaries.

“Certainly intellectual powers do not wane from one generation to another ... the major cause of the decline in the quality of current Christian literature is not intellectual but spiritual. **To enjoy a great religious book requires a degree of consecration to God and detachment from the world.**”

-A.W. Tozer¹



The antiquated language in older books can make embracing concepts expressed in them more tedious. They require concentration and truly applying yourself to understanding, but they provide weighty material that will strengthen you. It's possible in some cases to have the best of both worlds. Many of the classics have been revised to modernize the language such as E.M. Bounds' complete works on prayer and the classic John Bunyan's inspiring novel, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

⇒ Read challenging books, but read them where you won't be distracted and perhaps more slowly than you would other titles.

Most women agree on this: Their minds are rarely (if ever) truly empty. Women called to preach and teach don't read to fill empty space and time, but to fill their minds with new ideas—new things to think about and explore. Good books **cause growth** and **provide new concepts** that can **expand thinking**. They take the reader deeper, wider, and higher in contemplation.

¹ A. W. Tozer quoted by Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1967, 2007), 102.