

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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"Preaching!"

By Ancil Jenkins

I read recently that the preacher uses approximately 5,000 words in an average sermon (If you talk fast, you can squeeze in a few more.). Counting regular sermons as well as other speaking opportunities, this means the average preacher speaks about 675,000 words a year. The average book contains about 50,000 words, so this means that I have authored the equivalent of nearly 400 books in my career!

There are several observations about these figures. They show that creativity can be a problem. It is hard to be fresh, original, and non-repetitive Sunday after Sunday. If the same story is repeated occasionally, just realize that the preacher produces an equivalent of 13 books each year. No author can do that without some repetition (the danger of the tongue and our words – **James 3**).

It illustrates the problem of consistency. We know Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. But he also wrote many other plays that are not nearly as good as these. If he could not be consistent, how can we expect the same level from preaching. A preacher I knew once compared the preacher to a baseball player. He pointed out that a baseball player doesn't hit a home run every time he comes to bat. He strikes out some. He hits some fly balls. He hits singles, doubles, and triples. He doesn't hit a home run every time, but you do expect a home run occasionally. The goal of preaching is consistency, but it is difficult to reach.

The volume of words used in preaching shows the richness of the source. To preach a hundred times a year, not including

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classes and other speaking opportunities and still to be able to find material that is beneficial and interesting shows the greatness of the Bible. It is a gold mine from which we have taken many treasures, yet the depths of the mine are still untapped. The thrill of the discovery of Bible truth is unending. The joy of study and discovery and the joy of sharing the word of God makes one want to live for a thousand years and preach every day.

How to Get an "A" in Bible Study

By Carl McMurray

I admit that when I attended Florida College it was certainly not to become a preacher. I took the minimum required Bible courses and can't even say that I excelled in them. However, in reading Nehemiah chapter eight this past week it occurred to me how we can all get "A"s in Bible Study. The teacher, Ezra, shows us how as he takes the stage that was built just for this occasion, the reading of the Law.

Note that the people...

...were Assembled, v. 2. They didn't stay home believing they could worship "just as well" there as with the group. Their assembly demonstrated that this was something worth going out for. Everyone who understood what they heard was present.

...were Attentive, v. 4. "*The ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law,*" Nehemiah writes. I'm sure their I-Pods were turned off, as well as their cell phones. They were not balancing checkbooks or filing their nails or thinking about the sacrificial bar-be-que that might come later.

...were Agreeable, vv. 5-6. When Ezra opened the book, they all stood up. It doesn't say they remained standing for the next 4 hours, but that really isn't important. They showed respect as they began; and then as Ezra started with a blessing, they ALL answered, "*Amen, Amen.*" There wasn't the deafening silence heard in many churches after a

blessing. They were all respectful and ready to hear, ready to learn, and said so.

...were Assisted, vv. 7-8, ...in their learning, that is. Ezra just didn't read for 4 hours. At least 13 leaders plus any number of Levites helped the people to understand what was being read. Ezra read "*clearly*" the text says, and these others "*gave the sense*" so that the people understood the reading. There is a place for application and explaining the Scriptures, but one must have a mind set to accept such "sensible" teaching.

...were Affected, vv. 9, 12. With hearts and attitudes ready to accept the word of the Lord and teachers present to give the understanding, it is easy to see why they were affected to the point of mourning and weeping. In fact, they had to be encouraged NOT to mourn, but to rejoice; and verse twelve says it was all "*because they had understood the words that were declared to them.*"

How to get an "A" in Bible study then? Assemble with an Attentive and Agreeable mind set. Stay teachable so that when you're Assisted you will be Affected. And of course, the end result is graduating eternally and avoiding eternal detention.

How to Tell When You Are Getting

Weak

Author Unknown

1. When you had rather stay home than assemble with the saints.
2. When you had rather watch TV than visit the sick (or weak) and teach the lost.
3. When you had rather read a magazine or the daily paper than the Bible or religious material.
4. When you find a political speech inspiring but a gospel sermon boring.
5. When you pray for the preacher but sleep through his sermons.

6. When you thank God for the elders but refuse to cooperate with them.

7. When you talk long and loud about what the church should do but never do your part in what is being done now.

8. When you sing with your lips what you don't really mean in your heart.

9. When you look upon spiritual work as a chore rather than a privilege.

10. When you are offended by an article like this.