

The Preparation of Sermons

Textbook: *How to Prepare a Sermon*, Harold E. Knott

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 1

Book One, Chapter 1 "The Sermon: Its Definition and Purpose"

1. Define "sermon."
2. Define "homiletics" and distinguish between homiletics and the sermon.
3. Identify and explain the importance of each part of Phelps' definition of a sermon.

Book Two, Chapter 1 "The Value of Expository Preaching"

1. What is an expository sermon? How does it differ from other types?
2. What are some specific values of expository preaching?
3. Explain how the expository method helps to answer the question: "What shall I preach about next Sunday?"
4. How does expository preaching make it easier to introduce topics that are unwelcome?
5. How is expository preaching beneficial not only to the preacher but also to the congregation?
6. Knott maintains that "exposition is one of the rarest products of the pulpit." How does he explain this predicament? What are some of the causes?

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 2

Book One, Chapter 2, and Book Two, Chapter 2

Book One, Chapter 2 "The Sermon Outline"

1. Knott identifies three reasons why some teachers "have developed a spirit almost approaching contempt for formal outlines." What are these three reasons? Explain them.
2. Is a good outline a guarantee of a successful sermon? Why or why not? (If you explained this matter carefully in your response to question 1., skip to the next question.)
3. According to Knott, "The value of a good outline can not be overestimated." How does he support this claim? (What are some of the values for the speaker?)

4. What are the benefits of a good, clear outline for the hearer?
5. Phelps gives the sermon seven parts. What are they?
6. How many sermon parts does Knott recommend and what are they? What reason(s) does Knott give for preferring his outline over Phelps' outline?
7. Knott concedes that it is not always necessary to have a text, but he believes that there are some advantages to preaching from a text. What are some advantages he presents?
8. Toward the end of the chapter, Knott discusses the final three parts of a sermon outline: the main divisions or headings; the development; and the conclusion. Actually, the conclusion is not elaborated in this chapter. Choose either the "main divisions" or the "development" and sum up Knott's discussion of this part of a sermon.
9. What about using an outline in the pulpit? Pros and cons?

Book Two, Chapter 2 "The Sermon Outline"

1. Knott prefers a six-part outline for the expository sermon. List these six parts.
2. What is another word, or phrase, for the sermon part called "theme"?
3. How does the outline of an expository sermon differ from other kinds in "two particulars"? (What are these two differences?)
4. Knott (p. 27b) offers a "clearer," four-part breakdown (outline) of the significant elements of the expository sermon. List the four parts and add any important comments Knott presents.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 3

Book One, Chapter 3, and Book Two, Chapter 4

Book One, Chapter 3 "The Theme"

1. Define the following terms: a. "subject" b. "theme" and c. "proposition." Give an example or two of each.
2. Knott suggests some needs of the congregation which should influence a preacher's theme. What are some of these needs?
3. Another factor that influences the selection of a theme, says Knott, is temperament. How does Knott describe and evaluate the optimistic and pessimistic types?
4. Describe and evaluate the intellectual and the emotional temperaments.

Which are you most inclined to be? (Maybe neither?)

5. How can a preacher's experience influence the selection of a theme? What varied kinds of life experiences are described by Knott?
6. Knott identifies and describes three main characteristics of a good theme. Name them and describe them.
7. What are the benefits for the preacher of intensive study of individual Books of the Bible?
8. What are the pros and cons of advertising one's sermon themes? What are some ways to advertise successfully?

Book Two, Chapter 4 "The Theme"

1. What are some of the advantages of intensive study of individual Books of the Bible?
2. Knott writes: "In giving attention to any Book, the first thing to do is to study it with reference to its main purpose." How does he support this claim?
3. Identify two or three differences between the expository sermons of Maclaren and those of Campbell Morgan.
4. Why will different individuals find different subjects in the same Scripture?

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 4

Book One, Chapter 4, and Book Two, Chapter 3

Book One, Chapter 4 "The Text"

1. Knott claims that there has been a tendency in modern times to depart from the use of a text in preaching. What reasons does he give for this tendency? Consider the preaching you are exposed to (or the preaching that you do!). Do you agree with Knott's assessment? Explain.
2. What advantages may be gained by using texts? Sum up as clearly as you can four advantages that Knott presents.
3. Identify and explain two homiletical advantages to be gained by using a text.
4. Passages of scripture, according to Knott, do not all have the same value. Some passages, he maintains, need to be used with discretion. Explain and give an example or two.
5. Select three passages or texts for three sermons. List the theme, the text, and

the proposition for each. Justify the validity of each of your three propositions.

Book Two, Chapter 3, "The Scripture"

Drawing on Knott's presentation in this chapter:

1. Identify a whole Book of the Bible which could be used as the text for an expository sermon. Explain how this could be done.
2. Do the same with one chapter of the Bible.
3. And with one verse.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 5

Book One, Chapter 5, and Book Two, Chapter 5

Book One, Chapter 5 "The Introduction"

1. How does Knott define "Introduction"?
2. Knott identifies and describes or explains three purposes of the introduction. What are these three purposes? Sum up the important points that Knott develops in his discussion of these purposes.
3. Knott (p. 70) claims that some texts may be explained without relating them to the Book as a whole or to the chapter in which they occur. Cite three different books of the Bible which contain texts that illustrate this point, and tell why this claim is true. If you disagree, explain.
4. A sermon needs a proposition, says Knott. Define "proposition." Why is a proposition important?
5. The development of an introduction to a sermon based on a subject should differ from one based on a text in only one way. What is this one difference?
6. Select a text, give its theme, write out in full its introduction, and underline the proposition.
7. Show how you have given attention to each of the three purposes of a good introduction.
8. You are preparing a twenty-five minute sermon. About how many minutes should be used for the introduction?

Book Two, Chapter 5 "The Introduction"

1. Are there ways, according to Knott, in which the introduction to an expository sermon should be different from an introduction to any other type of sermon? Explain.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 6

Book One, Chapter 6 and Book Two, Chapter 6

Book One, Chapter 6 "The Main Divisions"

1. Knott defines and describes “the main divisions.” Sum up his definition of this term.
2. Knott asks two related questions: What is the value of “main divisions?” And what useful purpose do they serve? Identify and explain the three values provided by main divisions, according to Knott.
3. On page 83, Knott interjects the question, “Should the divisions of a sermon be clearly stated each time one preaches?” If, in your view, Knott offers a significant answer to this question, sum it up briefly and clearly. If you find his thoughts of little importance, explain your view.
4. The preacher has determined his theme and proposition, and the material has been collected. What principles should “govern the arranging and stating of these divisions?” Knott presents four such principles. Identify, explain, and illustrate (or give examples of) three of these principles. (You may present all four if you wish!)
5. “How many divisions should there be to a sermon?” (p. 89b) Sum up as clearly and concisely as you can Knott’s discussion of this question.

Book Two, Chapter 6 "The Main Divisions"

1. Why are the main divisions, according to Knott, “a very important part of the sermon”?
2. Jesus’ sermons are based upon what method?
3. Why is a sermon based on analogy one of the best types of sermons? Give an example of this type.
4. Identify, explain, and illustrate three types of divisions for expository sermons.
5. What are the principles that should guide the preacher in the development of main divisions? Apply these principles to two of the themes suggested in chapter IV. (This may tie-in with your response to question 4.)

6. Write three expository outlines whose divisions illustrate the three types mentioned in this chapter.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 7

Book One, Chapter 7 and Book Two, Chapter 7

Book One, Chapter 7 "The Development"

1. According to Knott, there are “several things necessary for the successful development of any sermon.” Identify four of these things, or conditions, and explain them.
2. What is the best time of day for study, for most people, according to Knott? Which is the worst time of day? Which is the best time of day for you?
3. Knott suggests the following principles for guiding the preacher in the selection of his materials: it must be vital, it must be relevant to the theme, and it should be characterized by originality. Explain and illustrate these principles.
4. Identify and explain three ways that the desirable quality of originality can be attained.
5. Identify the four literary forms that may be used in the development of sermons. Explain, describe, illustrate two of them.
6. Prepare a sermon outline that contains a text, theme, brief introduction, proposition, main divisions and sub-divisions that show the development of the sermon. Give brief illustrations and show where they go in the development.

Book Two, Chapter 7 "The Development"

1. Knott says, “. . . the first thing in the development is to explain and then to apply.” Identify and explain three methods of making the application.
2. What is the main difference between expository development and the development of any other type of sermon?—according to Knott.
3. What are the advantages of the expository method for preachers?
4. Choose two questions listed on page 92 (excluding question no. 1), and answer them as well as you can.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 8

Book One, Chapter 8, and Book Two, Chapter 8

Book One, Chapter 8 "The Conclusion"

1. Write an outline of the content of this chapter. Identify and explain a.) the main points made with regard to the importance of the conclusion, and b.) the methods that can be used to conclude effectively. Roughly three hundred words should do the job—not many more and not a lot fewer.
2. Prepare a sermon outline with the conclusion written out in full.
3. Describe the qualities that should make your conclusion (in no. 2) effective, and which kind of conclusion is it?

Book Two, Chapter 8 "Conclusion"

1. Does Knott make any important points in this chapter that he did not make in Book One, Chapter 8? If so, identify and explain them. Do not repeat material you presented in question No. 1 above.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 9

Book One, Chapter 9, and Book Two, Chapter 9

Book One, Chapter 9 "Types of Sermons"

1. Write either a textual sermon or a topical sermon that contains a theme, a text, a brief introduction (including the proposition), main divisions, some sub-divisions, and a brief conclusion. This should be about a 20-minute sermon—25 at the most.
2. Knott asks (question 2., page 130)—“Do you observe any dangers from the use of the textual sermon?” What do you think? Does Knott suggest any dangers? If so, what are they?

Book Two, Chapter 9 "Qualities Requisite for Success as an Expositor"

1. What are the qualities requisite for success as an expositor, according to Knott? List and explain them. Do you have any additional thoughts based on your own experience and observation?

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 10

Book One, Chapter 10, and Book Two, Chapter 10

Book One, Chapter 10 “Collecting Material”

1. Identify and describe or explain the methods of collecting material that Knott presents in this chapter. Which method or methods seem most helpful to you? Why?

Book Two, Chapter 10 “The Influence of the Expository Method on the Voice in Delivery of Sermons”

1. Explain how the expository method is likely to have a positive influence on the voice in the delivery of sermons.
2. What are the different “voices” that can be used in the delivery of sermons? Which does Knott regard most highly—and why? (If you covered this material in the previous question, ignore this question.)

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 11

Book Two, Chapter 11

“Sermons Illustrating the Different Use of Scripture”

1. Write an original sermon that illustrates one of the three ways that Scripture can be used in exposition: a whole Book, a part of a Book, or one verse only.

Preparation of Sermons - Lesson 12

Book Two, Chapter 12

“Sermons Illustrating the Different Methods of Development”

1. Write an original sermon that illustrates one of the three different methods of developing expository sermons discussed in this chapter. The methods are listed in the second paragraph on page 124.
2. Write a sermon outline that illustrates one of the two ways not used in question 1.