**3 Small Tweaks That Can Make a**

**Big Difference in Your Teaching**

**By Chris Hulshof**

I happen to be part of the population that requires glasses to see correctly. My current pair of glasses have apparently plotted against me so that they never stay where they’re supposed to.

Instead, I find myself periodically stopping by the eye doctor so he can tighten and readjust my glasses. Each time I do this, I’m amazed at how a little adjustment can impact my vision.

One small tweak or a tightening of something that got loose can make all of the difference in the world. This can also be true about our communication of the Scriptures.

One minor adjustment where we tighten something that has become loose can change the way others hear our teaching and preaching. I believe there are three small tweaks every communicator of the Scriptures can make that will improve how their audience hears a message.

LEARN THE VALUE OF A LOGLINE

One of the things that amazes me about screenwriters is their ability to summarize the content of their movie in thirty to forty words. Writers often call this a logline.

The idea of a logline is a simple one. Capture the hero, goal, obstacle, and change in one or two succinct sentences that summarize the story of the movie.

For example, here’s the logline for the movie Finding Nemo. “After his son is captured in the Great Barrier Reef and taken to Sydney, a timid clownfish sets out on a journey to bring him home.” If you’ve seen the movie, you can attest to the accuracy of this summary.

The first time I was exposed to this concept, I began to wonder what it would look like in my teaching assignments. I started creating loglines at various points in my Old Testament survey curriculum.

For example, here’s a logline I developed for one of the first stories about Elisha in 2 Kings 2:23-25: “When His new prophet to Israel is mocked by some immature young men, God responds by making good on an ancient curse.”

I came to realize loglines bring a certain level of clarity so that the actions of God become the central component in retelling the stories of Scripture. If I’m not able to accurately summarize the passage in one or two sentences, then I don’t know it well enough to teach.

As I’ve embraced the concept of loglines, I’ve found these simple sentences make the full story more memorable to me so that I can communicate it in a more meaningful manner to my students.

CREATE CLARITY THROUGH SUBTRACTION

When something isn’t clear enough we often seek more information. Can you explain that again for me? Could you please illustrate that?

Sometimes in both the design and the communication of a lesson or sermon, greater clarity is achieved through subtraction rather than addition. To put this tweak into practice, start big and work small.

This runs counter to the way we often structure our teaching where we start small (with an outline built off of our exegesis) and add onto it with the content from our studies.

Ask yourself, “What’s the one thing this passage is saying and how is it developed?” Whatever’s secondary to this theme and its development should have a purposeful connection in order to be included in your presentation.

CONSIDER THE CONTENT IN TERMS OF A STORY

One challenge anyone who communicates the Scriptures faces is trying to see the biblical content through the dual lenses of the story and hermeneutical principles.

We’re so well-versed on how to properly exegete a passage of Scripture, we don’t often consider the content in terms of the historical story.

For example, it’s easy to teach through any section of Paul’s letters and become so focused on the content of the letter we fail to see this communication in terms of its historical context.

Paul was a real person writing to real people in a real church who were struggling with real issues. In some cases, Paul personally knew the people he was writing to.

Seeing the epistolary literature within the storyline of the book of Acts is a great way to begin reshaping the content of our teaching so that it’s connected to the narrative of Scripture.

The same type of problem can occur in the Old Testament. Failing to connect the stories of the prophets to their places in the history of Israel and Judah removes these books from the full historical context of their stories.

Making these three small tweaks will help us study the Bible in a way that allows us to see the full narrative of Scripture better as we encounter God in His Word.

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The above article, “3 Small Tweaks That Can Make a Big Difference in Your Teaching,” was written by Chris Hulshof.

https://factsandtrends.net/2018/12/03/3-small-tweaks-that-can-make-a-big-difference-in-your-teaching/

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”