

## Thoughts to Guide You As You Exegete Yourself

1. In the Presence of God (Now)
  - A. Describe your private devotional time.
    1. What are you reading? How is it changing you?
      - a. What Scriptures are you reading?
      - b. What supportive biblical material are you reading in your time with God?
    2. Do you make prayer a regular part of your daily time with God?
      - a. What changes have you seen God bring about in your life because of your prayer time?
      - b. What changes have you seen God bring about in the lives of those around you because of your prayer time?
    3. Is music a part of your time with God?
      - a. What genres of music draw you closer to God devotionally?
      - b. Do the words in the music fit doctrinally with your understanding of Scripture?
      - c. Are you more engaged with the beat of the music rather than the message of the music?
    4. Are you engaged in the practice of any of the spiritual disciplines that mark the lives of humble leaders who have gone before you?
      - a. Meditation, prayer, fasting, study
      - b. Simplicity, solitude, submission, service
      - c. Confession, worship, guidance, celebration
  - B. Describe your congregational walk with God?
    1. Are you actively involved in a local congregation?
    2. Do people in the congregation challenge you to remain steadfast in your relationship with God and in your view of doctrine?
    3. Do people in the congregation encourage you to grow in your day-to-day relationship with Christ?
    4. Do people in the congregation encourage you to use your spiritual gifts to help the body of Christ grow intrinsically and extrinsically?
  - C. Do you have someone in your life that holds you accountable for your walk with Jesus?
    1. Do you make yourself available to them for discussion and correction, if needed, on a regular basis?
    2. How have you seen them help in the past?
  - D. What secular material are you reading, watching or listening to that shapes your view of Christ and His Church? If it does not shape your view of Christ, how does it shape your view of life in general?
    1. What sermon illustrations do you draw from your secular reading/watching/listening to illustrate God's involvement with His people?

As iron sharpens iron,  
so a person sharpens his friends  
— Solomon

2. How have these secular views of life shaped your view of God and His Church?
2. What Brought You Here (Before)?
  - A. What happened in your home as a child and young person to shape your understanding of God, His Word and His church?
    1. Did your parents take you to church, send you to church, let you attend if you so desired, neglected to give you any spiritual upbringing, or forbid you to be a part of the church?
    2. Did you come from an abusive or addictive home? The events and addictions will shape your view of God and your relationship with Him and others.
  - B. What sort of church did you come from?
    1. Was it a high church or low church liturgically?
    2. Was it bound up in legalism or free to extend grace and mercy?
    3. Was it Pentecostal or charismatic in nature, or neither?
    4. From what denominational perspective did you begin (Calvinistic, Holiness Movement, Evangelical, Liberal or Progressive Theology)? Did you stay in that frame of reference or move to another perspective?
    5. What kind of record of accomplishment have you had with churches?
  - C. How did you come to know Christ as your Savior and Lord?
    1. Who were the important people in this development?
    2. What passages of Scripture about Christ most influenced your decision to become a Christian?
    3. What events played a significant role in your spiritual development?
  - D. After you came to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, who influenced your development?
    1. What authors have you read, or preachers have you listened to that shaped your thinking and your beliefs?
    2. What were the defining moments in your walk with Jesus that have shaped your understanding of God up to this point?
  - E. Describe your devotional life of the past.
    1. How has your devotional time with Christ developed over the years?
    2. What authors, musicians or television programs influenced the way you thought and the way you felt?
    3. Have you experienced a disconnect between what you know to be truth and the way you feel about the truth?
3. Where Will You Go (Future)?
  - A. What dreams do you perceive that God is giving to you to accomplish for Him?
  - B. What dreams do you have for yourself and your family?
  - C. Are you able to distinguish your dreams and desires from those of God?
  - D. Have you experienced a call from God to a form of ministry: preaching, youth ministry, music, teaching, counseling, missions, writing, medical or legal assistance, secretarial, the world of finance, laborer, sports, camping, ad infinitum?

As iron sharpens iron,  
so a person sharpens his friends  
— Solomon

- E. What will you do to remain faithful to God's calling on your life?
    - 1. Privately?
    - 2. Congregationally?
  - F. How will you protect your heart and mind from the influences of the world?
4. Prepare, Prepare, Prepare (During)
- A. Have you properly prepared your heart to stand before God and the congregation to speak on behalf of God?
    - 1. Do you hold God in awe and reverence as you prepare to deliver His message ([Isaiah 6:1-7](#))?
    - 2. Do you see your task in sermon preparation as a holy calling of God, or do you see it as a part of the "job" to finish?
    - 3. Have you confessed your sin to Him? Have you cleansed your soul?
    - 4. Have you made things right with your wife and children?
    - 5. Are you at peace with the leaders and members of the congregation?
    - 6. Are you preparing so that you can prove to "one" person that you do know what you're talking about? Is your preaching about you or about God?
    - 7. Have you allowed the Spirit of God to work through your preparations and now, your presentation?
    - 8. Are you giving the Spirit enough time to work on your heart as you prepare to speak on His behalf?
    - 9. Are you preparing devotionally, looking for help for your struggles from the Word of God?
    - 10. Are you preparing academically for your "students" seeing yourself as superior to them in the knowledge of the Word of God?
    - 11. Do you rely on your academic background and/or your walk with Christ as you prepare to apply the Word of God to your life and the lives of people in the congregation?
    - 12. Do you seek God's guidance through prayer as you prepare to speak on His behalf?
    - 13. Are you applying the Word of God to the lives of people who sit before you or are you simply offering the results of your exegetical studies?
    - 14. Are you waiting until the last moment to prepare your message for the next morning?
  - B. What happens to you while you are teaching or preaching the Word of the Lord?
    - 1. What battles might you face as you preach? What battles have you faced while you preached?
    - 2. Do you fear people that disagree with you or hold a paycheck over your head?
    - 3. Do you experience the fear of people misunderstanding you?
    - 4. Do you struggle with pride while you preach?
    - 5. Do you tend to focus on the mistakes that you make rather than moving on through the sermon?
    - 6. Do you seek the approval of people? Do you want them to say "amen?" Do you want them to nod their heads in agreement? Do you want them to laugh at your jokes and humor? Do you want them to like you?

As iron sharpens items,  
so a person sharpens his friends  
— Solomon

7. As you preach, are you convicted of your own sinfulness as you call others to repent of their sins?
8. Do you experience the struggle between pride and humility as you stand before the church and exegete the Word of God?
9. Do you breathe quick prayers for guidance to speak the truth, to say things courageously and lovingly that may not be popular, to bring to remembrance those ideas that touched your heart during your preparation?
10. Do you let the Spirit totally control you as you stand teaching and preaching before God and His church?

5. When You Finish, You're Not (Afterward).

A. What results do you want to see and experience when you finish teaching or preaching?

1. Do you want people to vigorously shake your hand with the words of "well done"? Or, do you wait for the Master to say, "Well done good and faithful servant."
2. Do you hope that someone will say, "we have heard the voice of a god"? Or, do you want people to say, "You made me stop and think today."
3. Do you want people to challenge you, disagreeing with what you said?
4. Do you want people to go out and do what you've revealed to them from the word of God?

B. Have you already started to prepare for the next time you preach?

Finally, be aware that God gives us an opportunity each week to "examine" ourselves ([1 Corinthians 11:28-29](#)). While Paul is talking about examining ourselves at the time of Communion, I believe he sets a principle for our lifestyle. When you stand before the people of God or sinners, your actions and attitudes from the previous week will follow you into the pulpit. As you speak, your actions and attitudes will either haunt you or comfort you. As a servant of God, take time to examine your life in relationship to His life (Cf. [2 Corinthians 13:5](#); [Galatians 6:4](#)).

As iron sharpens items,  
so a person sharpens his friends  
— Solomon