

Dee Bowman has often said of preaching: *"It is the Gospel in Personality."* He is articulating the reality that while a whole line of men may preach the sound and authoritative Truth, their personalities, mannerisms, history, knowledge, and overall individuality will make each one of different.

This is most easily illustrated with the **New Testament**. 27 letters (think "sermons") – written by 8 or 9 different men. All of it is Gospel. But each writer is different. The sentence structure, the adjective usage, the points of emphasis, the tone, all differ. Each man brings a different set of variables – personality, history, expertise, and it is reflected in the letters. It may even mean you have a favorite letter – like James for his practical language. But we respect them all equally, since it's GOSPEL first and PERSONALITY second.

This same approach is needed with **preachers**. No two are alike as we said. Some have great voices. Some have high pitch. Some stand still. Some move around. Some box up three points every week. Some do the stream of consciousness one-point sermons. Some short. Some long. Some with jazz hands. Some without. But all can be appreciated and needful, so long as they are GOSPEL first and PERSONALITY second.

While we are at it, let's add an often overlooked element here – The Gospel in Personality also applies to the **hearer**. Each and every person brings their own personality to the listening side of preaching. And this is largely why there will never be one style of preaching that is always best. Someone will favor another way. Some listeners have short attentions, so they want tight points. Some are grinders so they want long, deep observations. Some favor text facts, others application from text. But a room of very different people can all grow when they are GOSPEL first and PERSONALITY second.

### **I. "furthering the administration of God which is by faith" (I Tim. 1:3-4)**

"rather than godly edifying which is in faith" (KJV, NKJV) - oikonomia – "the management of a household or of household affairs" – "dispensation [mode of dealing]"

The reason I am standing right here right now is (to build trust in the management, the mode of dealing, that God has delivered) Trust in God's plan, by learning it and loving it!

**Col. 1:13** – After all, we have been transferred under the dominion and rule of Jesus, which is the dealing of God. Shouldn't we thirst to know of His laws, His way, to grab the light of understanding.

**Every sermon ought to have something that reveals God's plan for your life** – and why you should trust in it. You should demand that of anyone who preaches from this pulpit. But I need something as well. I need listeners longing for that. *"Please, read something, explain something that teaches me more about how God deals with me, about Him managed plan, I want to believe in it and trust it and know it more than ever."*

### **II. "the goal of our instruction is love..." (I Tim. 1:5)**

"The end of the commandment is charity" – We are teaching, commanding, instructing to build love.

This is the word "agape" – "brotherly love, affection, good will" – When you sit down to hear a sermon you ought to think, *"If this guy is doing his job, in Christ, I will learn how to better love my God, my brethren, my self, the Word of God."* **Teach me to love, God's way!**

1. *"from a pure heart"* – Get all the bad out. All of the anger, the dissention among brethren, all of the weeks Satan has planted in your heart that defile me, I want to have a love for God and brethren without all of that stuff. Instruct me how to do that. How to forgive... like Jesus.
2. *"and a good conscience"* – "the ability to distinguish between good and bad" – I don't want to be hypocritical, mixing good and bad in my life. I don't want to lead a double life. I want to distinguish and do good all the time. (**II Tim. 1:3** – I want to be like Paul. Learning what is right and what is wrong and loving God without a mixture of the two)
3. *"and a sincere faith"* – *"faith unfeigned"* – I want to be so strong in the Lord I make the right decisions. **Ro. 8:29** – I want to be like Jesus, consistently doing the right thing, being faithful to God as Christ was faithful to me.

So, when you sit down to hear a sermon, and the man says, "turn in your Bible's to..." be thinking, *"okay, teach me the love of God, show me the heart of Christ, I want a purer heart, better conscience, and more sincere faith."*

### **III. “godliness is profitable for all things” (I Tim. 4:7-11) – Godliness is very good!**

Godliness – “to be devout, denotes the idea of piety (dutiful) which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him” (Vines) Best defined in **I Tim. 4:12**.

Satan doesn’t want you to get that. Satan wants you to think of sermons and classes as a waste of time, an exercise of Christianity you need to do but don’t need to care about. After all, godliness is restricting, unrewarding, utterly sacrificial. And preaching has to spice it up with empty assurances or promises.

No, our message is godliness. Obeying God with proper attitude. Because it is super profitable

1. “*since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come*” – **Vs 8** – Godliness makes your life better today, and forever. It prepares good things for now and later!
2. “*we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men*” – **V 8** - Oh yes, this is the good stuff. Learning to have a god-ward attitude, to serve and please Him, puts our hearts right in the middle of His blessings. *Godliness qualifies us for Grace!!! Salvation!!! Heaven!!!*

**(I Tim. 4:7-8)** Becoming godly takes discipline. Preaching on hard topics and about making major changes. A lot of people don’t like that. Don’t preach on my sin. We aren’t preaching on sin, we are preaching on godliness, which is awesome and brings great gain. I hope you long for that. Let us have an appetite to learn to be godly, to discipline ourselves and see the benefit in holy living!

### **IV. “some will fall away from the truth” (I Tim. 4:1-6)**

There was a lot of false teaching around Ephesus. Some taught it didn’t matter what you did with your body as long as your mind was on God. Others, as in this text, taught you had to deny your body all forms of joy in order to be holy before God: “*forbid marriage, advocate abstaining from foods.*” Truth against Error was needed!

*“In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus...”* Servitude in teaching involves exposing error. Teaching them why some things just aren’t so.

**II Tim. 4:3-4** – Not everyone will teach or live the Truth. Falsehood and religious error will erupt.

**II Tim. 4:3** – You teach. Call down, encourage, work through it with the brethren.

That is why we preach on Denominationalism or Once Saved, Always Saved, or Musical instruments in worship or Pre-Millennialism. This is why materialism and idolatry and “negative” preaching exists. Because things take over if we don’t fight them. I’ll try to do so simply and tactfully. But you have to demand that of preachers!

### **V. “who will be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2)**

What if the preacher is preaching on something you have down pat? You’ve heard it one hundred times. You know it, have embraced it, and are living it. Do we really need to hear it again?

*Entrust* – “to place beside or near or set before” (food placed upon the table)

So that these faithful men (those who are doing it) can teach it to others also.

**Heb. 5:12** – Notice the sad state of affairs among these brethren. They have had the milk placed on their tables. The fundamental principles of Christ. They should be eating meat served to them and teaching that which they have learned. Instead, he has to come back and reserve them the simple stuff they have forgotten.

Sometimes we preach milk (baptism, miracles, resurrection). Maybe you need that, maybe you know it. Either way, you ought to be learning it so well that you will teach it to others.

Every time a preacher stands up here and says, “open you Bibles too...” you’re attitude ought to be, “*maybe its going to be something I need for me, maybe something I know, but food will be served, food I want to ingest and food I want to share with others who hunger and thirst*” Learning with a mind to Teach – a powerful idea!

**Conclusion** – NT writers were different and what they make together is incredible. The same is true of preachers. What each man brings in personality can do different things to different people at differing times and usually come together to help when God’s providence aligns it. But not by accident: by the GOSPEL! I pray that’s what we teach. And I pray for personalities to bring it to life and embrace it in their own lives.