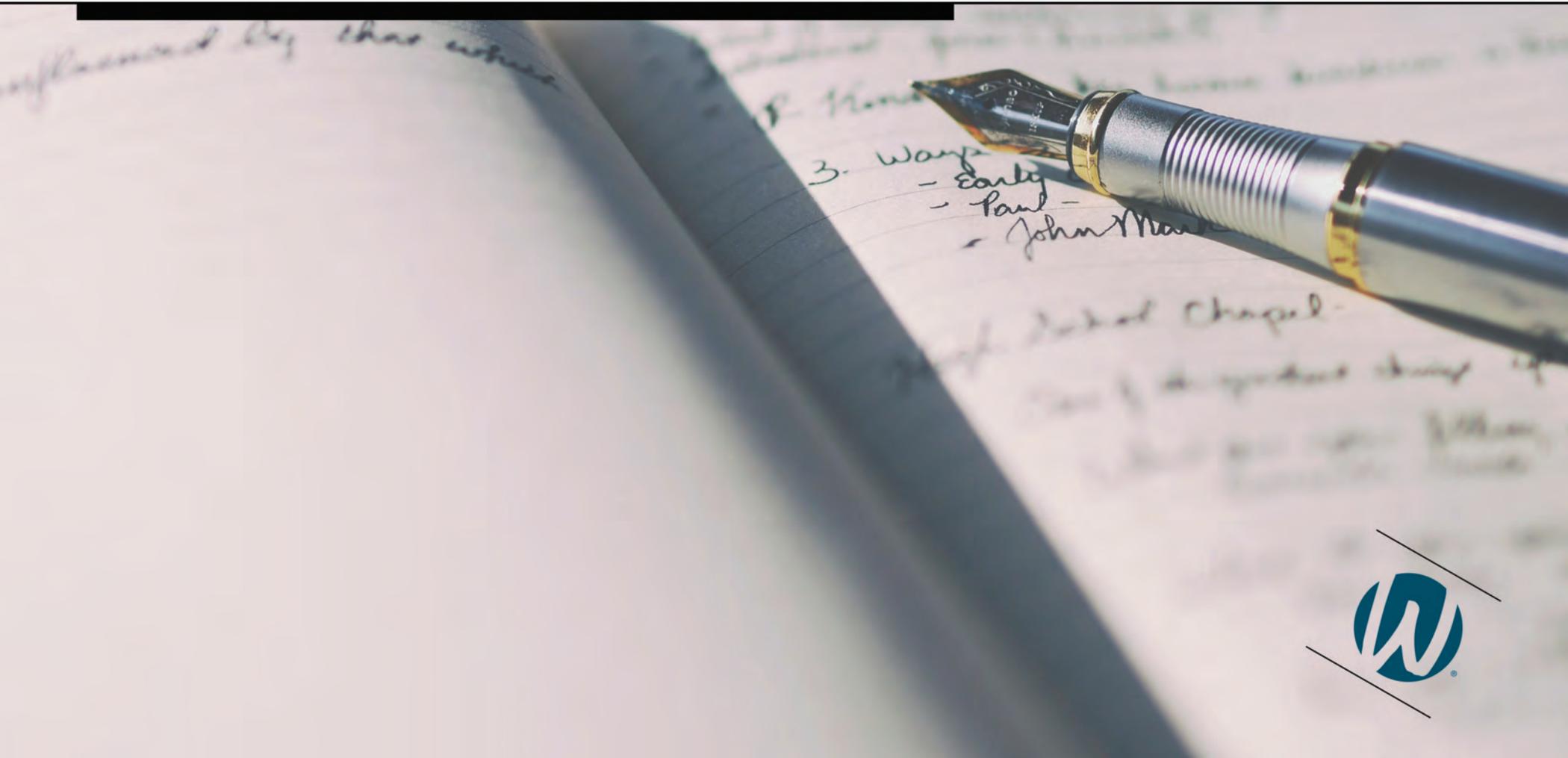


# HOW TO WRITE A **KILLER LESSON**





# INTRODUCTION

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Why write a resource on how to write a lesson?  
Don't you already know how to write a lesson?

**I'M SURE YOU DO!**

## REASON 1

Most preachers and teachers of God's Word have a very different process when it comes to studying God's Word and turning that study into something someone else can teach. Often varied ways of creating lessons leads to varied lessons. A good goal is to have a unified and cohesive curriculum of Biblically based lessons that could be taught by any church. This requires a unified system for developing those lessons so that each lesson feels connected to all the others.

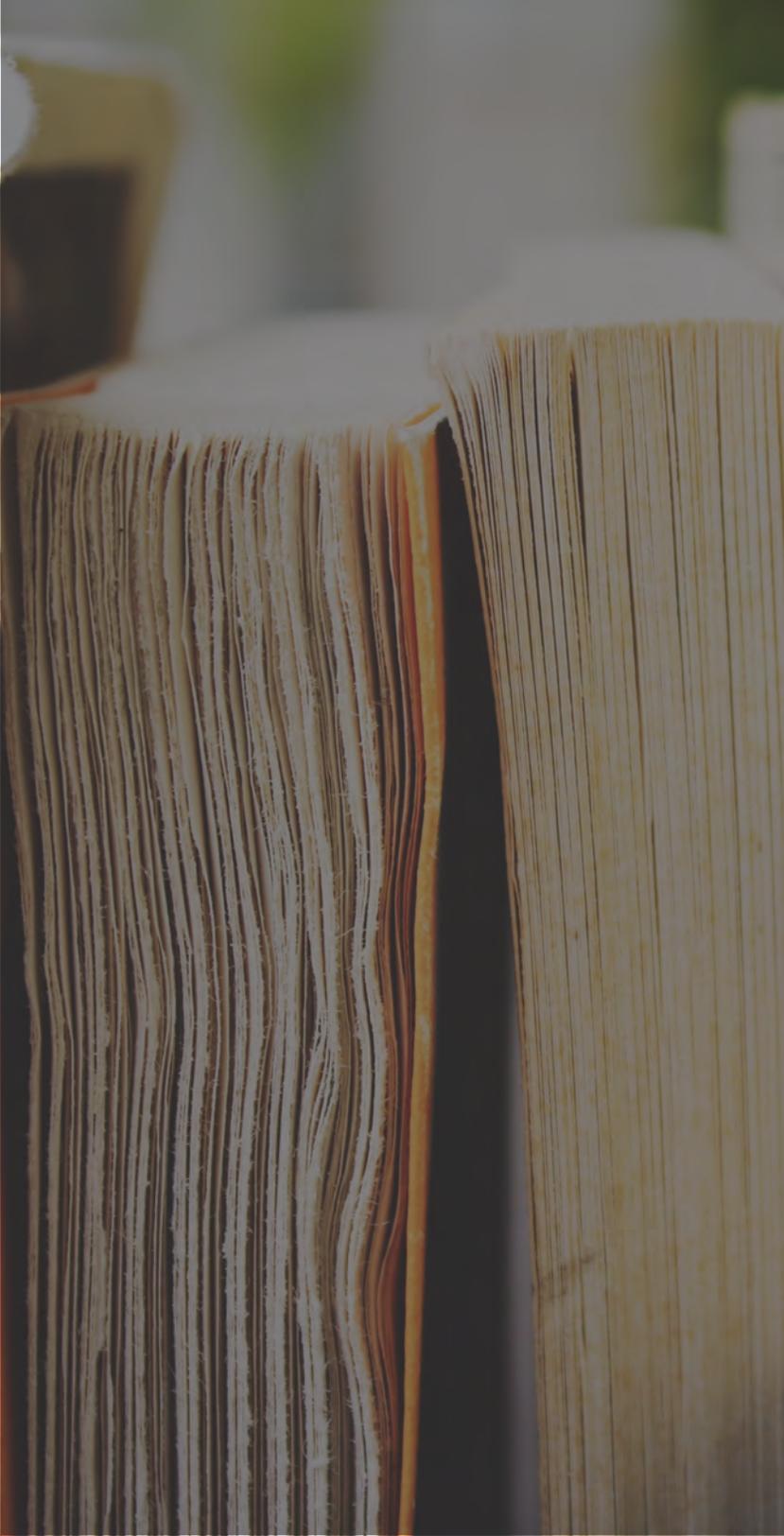
## REASON 2

Many processes that a writer would use will work well for that specific writer. However, that same process may not work at all for a different writer. One of the goals of this guide is to help you with a system that can work for as many writers as possible.

Having said all of that, this is a guide, not a straight-jacket. The end-goal of every lesson is the best lesson you as a writer are capable of producing. This guide was created to make your job easier and aide in your writing process from start to finish.

Finally this guide includes "pro-tips", helpful hints and tricks that have been beneficial for many writers over the years that should help you during your writing process.

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# HOW TO WRITE **A KILLER LESSON**

**1**

## **THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE-CHANGING LESSON**

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# 1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE-CHANGING

## THE GOAL: LIFE-TRANSFORMATION

**James 1:22**

There are a lot of different purposes that a specific lesson can satisfy. But ultimately, the goal of every lesson is life-transformation. Your study, your illustrations, your hook, and your takeaway point should all aide in this one goal; moving people to act based on God's Word. Another way of saying that is that "acting on application" is the end goal.

That can look different for different types of lessons, and we'll get into the types of lessons and how they function in another section of this guide. However, for now keep this in mind: "How can I get students to ACT?" James 1:22 says, "Be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer." There are secondary goals to have, such as clarity in teaching the Scripture, and teaching students doctrine and Biblical truth, but every objective is to be made to serve the ultimate objective of Biblical life change in the lives of students.



### PRO TIP

DON'T TEACH FOR BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING.  
HEAD-KNOWLEDGE DOESN'T ALWAYS TRANSLATE INTO  
LIFE CHANGE.

The goal isn't to just "teach students the Bible." The goal is to be a vehicle for students to obey the Bible. While those goals can and often do overlap, that isn't always the case. It's important to recognize when those two goals are at odds with each other and change the direction of the lesson to focus on application and life-change rather than biblical exposition.

It can be easy to fall into the trap of biblical explanation during the lesson writing process because biblical study is incredibly important. As a writer, you have to have a deep understanding of the truth or passage that you are teaching on. However, often when we as writers switch from biblical study to lesson writing we have so much content that we love that we don't want to cut anything. It can even feel like all that time spent studying was wasted if we don't use any of

that content. But if life-change is the goal, then we have to remember we aren't trying to pack as much biblical knowledge into the lesson as possible but rather we are trying to present Scripture in a clear way to compel students to biblical action. We don't want this action motivated by guilt or hypocritical reasons, but rather because they have a desire to love and honor God. We'll talk more on this on our section about writing from one point later in the guide.

## STRESS 'OBEDIENCE FROM LOVE' NOT LAW

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

Many times the heart of a lesson is a specific command from Scripture to act a certain way or to refrain from a specific activity. As fallen people (and even Eve in the garden before the fall) we tend to turn commands into strict rules to follow. God's Word is clear though, we don't grow because of obedience to the Law. Instead, we have a new love relationship with Jesus and we obey through the power of the Spirit's work in our lives.

As we teach, it is easy for "law-driven" language to creep into our lessons and wrongly lead students to believe that it will be by their works that they make spiritual progress. We never want to even hint at that. Instead, our goal must always be to use Gospel driven language. We want to communicate the heart of the Gospel; that Jesus is the only solution to every problem and that only through Him can we make any kind of spiritual movement in our lives.



### PRO TIP

LET THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST BE THE MOTIVATION  
IN EVERY LESSON

When it comes to obedience, we want to clearly communicate to students that obedience comes as an overflow of our love relationship with our Savior. Sometimes it's hard to avoid statements such as, "we ought to..." Or "if we only worked at..." These are the kind of statements that come across as works based legalism and guilt driven motivation that we want to avoid. Do a

read-through of your lesson at least once and ask yourself, “Does this sound like law, or Gospel?”



### PRO TIP

YOU CAN NEVER OVEREMPHASIZE THE WORK OF CHRIST.

Overemphasize the motivation of Christ’s love as the power for doing concrete actions.

## BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND BIBLE STUDY

### 2 Timothy 2:15

We recognize that there are many places in God’s Word that godly Christians can disagree on. Paul challenged Timothy to, “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” This was a challenge to interpret God’s word accurately and diligently. In more scholarly language, this means having a good hermeneutic. Jesus even criticized the Pharisees for their bad hermeneutics telling them, “You do not understand the Scriptures” (Mark 12:24).

In order to understand the true meaning of the text, it’s important to look at the literal, historical, grammatical, contextual interpretation of Scripture. This includes an understanding of both the inerrancy of Scripture as well as an understanding that all Biblical books fall into specific genres as well.

For your reference, here is hermeneutics in plain words:

- *The “Plain Sense” principle:* Or “literal” meaning. This means we aren’t seeking allegorical meaning that isn’t in the text. We let the plain words of Scripture direct the meaning unless we are told otherwise by Scripture itself.
- *The Author Intent principle:* In general, we are seeking the meaning that the original author intended when he wrote the words. There are cases where God uses the meaning in other uses, but such cases are rare and are explained by other Scriptures.

- *The Contextual principle:* Every passage of Scripture should be read in light of the surrounding paragraphs, chapters, and the entire book. We aren’t seeking to remove verses from their actual meaning.



### PRO TIP

ONLY USE PASSAGES THAT DIRECTLY MAKE THE POINT YOU ARE MAKING. DON’T TRY TO MAKE A PASSAGE SAY SOMETHING THAT ISN’T STATED IN THAT SCRIPTURE.

- *The Grammatical principle:* To have the clearest sense of what a passage is saying, it is important to understand the Greek and Hebrew words that the passage was originally written in.
- *The Historical principle:* Often to understand Scripture, we must have a clear understanding of how the intended audience would have understood something to mean. This means studying ancient cultures and customs.
- *The Genre principle:* Genres are a particular type of literature in Scripture. Often words and concepts are used differently in different genres. For example, most scholars agree that Revelation is Apocalyptic literature. Much of the language isn’t meant to be taken literally even though “Literal” is one of our principles of interpretation.

## LESSON TYPES: A HEALTHY BIBLICAL DIET

### Hebrews 5:12

Two keys to writing a great lesson are understanding what type of lesson you are writing and understanding how your lesson fits into the overall theme. To help you understand what type of lesson you are writing, this section includes a list of each lesson type and how they differ from each other. The lesson type will often determine the approach you take in writing the actual lesson. For example, a lesson on the doctrine of God’s love will have a slightly different process than a series on the book of Philippians would.

We look at lesson types as different foods in an individual's diet. Everyone needs healthy food to survive and God's Word has many types of "food" to offer. The author of Hebrews even confronts believers for being stuck on the "milk" of God's Word when he wanted to teach them the "meat" of the Word. It is clear from this passage (Hebrews 5:12) that we need different types of "food" from God's Word at different points in our spiritual formation.

We could conclude that just as it's important to have a balanced and healthy diet of food in our lives, it's important to have a balanced and healthy diet of Scripture in our lives as well. We look at these lesson types as different types of "food" in our Scriptural diet. Having a balanced and especially a mix of each is important in spiritual formation. While understanding theological truth is vitally important, it is only one type of "food". It would be like eating only steak for every meal. At the same time, theological lessons should still make up the largest portion of lessons every year, giving students enough "meat" from God's Word.



### PRO TIP

TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TYPE OF LESSONS BEFORE BEGINNING PREPARATION.

Here is the a list of lesson types and purposes for each:

- *Theological Lessons*: Focus on a specific theological truth such as the character of God, the truth about sin, or the Holy Spirit. In these lessons, truths are developed by searching throughout all of the Bible to find passages that all speak to the same subject. The purpose is to give students a solid foundation of what to believe. This guards against heresy and helps students to think rightly about big topics such as Man, God, and the Trinity.
- *Specific Bible Books*: The goal of teaching through a specific book is to cover the major themes of the book. Often there is too much in a book to cover it fully, so just a part of a larger book can be covered. The purpose is to teach God's Word in an exegetical approach through specific passages of a singular book.

- *Apologetics*: Peter tells us that we should always be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason" (1 Peter 3:15). More than ever, students are under attack from the culture causing them to ask hard questions about the truths found in God's Word. It's important to answer those questions for skeptical unsaved students as well as Christians who are having doubts themselves. The purpose is to show that there is evidence and logic to what we believe and show students that our faith is based on real historical fact.
- *Topical*: This lesson type allows you to deal with hot cultural topics that students are facing today. These topics are always changing but are important to give students biblical answers to whatever the issue of the moment is. While the problems humans face are constantly changing, the truth of God's Word always applies. Topical lessons allow us to deal with specific things students are dealing with that other generations may not have faced.
- *Christian Basics*: This allows us to deal with basic biblical disciplines that lead to growth in the life of a Christian. Some examples include prayer, evangelism, worship, small groups, and accountability. These could be called the "milk" of the word as they are the very first thing that believers need to understand from God's Word. This can be a great study for new believers each year.
- *Story of the Bible*: The Bible follows one grand story arc that follows the fall of Man and God's ultimate solution in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This study follows that thread throughout Scripture and gives us the ability to draw students attention to Gospel throughout the entire Bible. The purpose is to focus students back to the purpose of the Gospel in everything.
- *Character Studies*: These lessons allow us to follow specific biblical characters in Scripture and learn valuable life lessons from their example. We focus these lessons on lesser known biblical characters. The purpose is to give students the lives of real people as they follow God or disobey God.
- *Life-Changing Passages*: There are several passages in Scripture that we come back to time and again for truth. These lessons allow us to teach through those vital passages so that students are familiar with them.

## 2. OVERVIEW ITEMS

### THE WRITER'S TEMPLATE

The Writer's template located in Appendix A in this guide can be referenced at any time by [CLICKING THIS LINK](#). However, there are 3 main sections to it and we will walk through each section and what each section contains in the next three parts of this guide. Here is a general overview of what the writer's template contains and what must be finished for each lesson.

Overview Items:

- Series Theme: This is the overall topic or theme of the lessons you are teaching. For example, God the Father (a theological series). Or the book of Philippians. This could also be Apologetics topics. This should be planned out before you begin writing.
- Lesson Objective
- Sticky Statement
- Definitions

General Lesson Format:

- Hook
- Lesson Content
- Application
- The Decision

Focus on writing the best lesson you can. With that goal in mind, this lesson template has been simplified down to it's simplest form for your convenience and to give you more time to spend on the lesson content, application, hook, and decision.

### BUILDING A LESSON OBJECTIVE

As we've discussed earlier the objective of every lesson is life change. The lesson objective then should not be built around just the content of the lesson but also the specific main application of the lesson.

To come up with the lesson objective take your lesson theme and focus it down

### GREAT RESOURCES FOR YOU

There are dozens of great books on preaching, teaching and general communication but there are a few that stand out from the rest, and they are listed below. We truly believe these books will help you become a better preacher and teacher of God's Word and at the same time help you write better lessons. These are by no means "required" reading just helpful resources for writers looking to take their skills to the next level.



1

MADE TO STICK:

Why some ideas stick and others don't

2

Here is a great article for your reference  
[PROPREAMER.COM/DANIEL-TIGER/](http://PROPREAMER.COM/DANIEL-TIGER/)

3

COMMUNICATING FOR A CHANGE  
by Andy Stanley

to one point that you want to cover. Make it crystal clear and as succinct as you can make it. Every other part of the lesson should be hammering home a single nail of truth. It is our desire that one truth be taken to its very depths, instead of trying to cover several truths through several points.

This direction flows from a philosophy that people find it hard to remember more than one thing from a lesson or sermon. Since life change is the goal, we want these lesson to live on throughout the week. Therefore, not only should there be just one point, it should be your goal to boil it down into its most simple form. Another way to say it is that your lesson should have one central idea, expressed in many ways. We want every lesson to take one idea and take it as deep as you can through sub-points (content), illustrations, and application. These other features of the lesson are to drive home that one point further and take it deeper into the heart of the students.

Therefore, your very first task is to take your Directional Statement and pray about what one single point God would have you focus on for that lesson. For example you may be given a directional statement such as “God’s Mercy and Grace” as part of a module series on Theology Proper. Obviously there are many many points that could be covered within this example. You could focus just on Grace, or just on Mercy. You could focus on what Grace looks like from several different angles. You could talk about God’s mercy in salvation, or God’s mercy in that He doesn’t send each person to hell immediately for sin.

The point is that within this one directional statement lives dozens of single points. It is your first job to decide which of those points your lesson will cover. You may have a lesson that is a character study and covers the life of a person in the Bible. Obviously there are many points that could be drawn from the life of a person and so all of those must be narrowed down to ONE single point.



### PRO TIP

YOUR LESSON OBJECTIVE IS AN ELEVATOR PITCH. IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN YOUR ENTIRE LESSON IN JUST A FEW SECONDS THEN YOU HAVE MORE WORK TO DO.

Communication of any kind revolves around clarity and specificity. Our desire in having you choose one point is to help make every lesson perfectly clear about what it’s about. Research has shown a powerful truth about how humans process information. The more choices we are given, the harder it is for us to take action on something. Since we want students to take action, our goal is to remove the clutter and distraction and give them just one truth to think about and focus on during the lesson and during the week.

Here is a great article that encapsulates the idea of focusing around one point. You can find it [HERE](#).

As you prepare your lesson, this will probably be the greatest challenge you face. You will have a lot of content you want to include that may tempt you to bring up other points. You may think you need to cover other points in order to fulfill your main topic theme. DON'T DO IT! Before moving on to crafting content and further study, satisfy yourself that you’ve boiled down your lesson into one simple idea that is easy to understand.

The lesson objective is not just about having a single point, it’s also about making sure that point is simple and clear...to students (not adults!). Also make sure to include one major application at the end of the lesson objective. Here are some examples:

#### Example 1 |

Main topic sentence: The sealing of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers

Objective: To convince students that the Holy Spirit enables them to find security in their unchanging relationship to their heavenly Father.

#### Example 2 |

Main topic sentence: The baptism of the Holy Spirit

Objective: To show students how the Baptism of the Holy Spirit brings unity in the midst of diversity and to inspire them to start seeking that unity today

#### Example 3 |

Main topic sentence: God’s Holiness and Justice

Objective: To convince students to give up a desire for vengeance because of

God's holiness

#### Example 4 |

Main topic sentence: God's Mercy and Grace

Objective: Students will understand that we must make ourselves weak (in humility) to receive power in God's grace.

#### Example 5 |

Main topic sentence: A lesson on the importance of discipleship

Objective: The highest call of every believer is to be a disciple.



#### PRO TIP

AFTER FINISHING YOUR OBJECTIVE ASK SOMEONE ELSE TO READ IT. ASK THEM IF IT READS LIKE ONE CLEAR POINT, OR IF THEY SEE MULTIPLE POINTS IN YOUR OBJECTIVE.

Here is an example of a writer who had multiple points without realizing it.

Objective: Students will understand that where your treasure is there will your heart be also and show them how to work so they can give, save, and spend.

Can you spot the two points? They are separated by the "and" in this objective. They are 1) where your treasure is there your heart will be, and 2) work so you can give, save and spend. In this case there is quite a bit of work left to do. This writer needs to decide which of these important points he will cover. If he chooses the first, he needs to boil that idea down to a simpler form because the idea of your heart being where your treasure is needs further explanation.

A simpler form of that idea could be this: How we spend our money shows what we really care about. That is one simple point taken from the Directional Statement given above. It is then stripped down to make it easy to understand.

## STICKY STATEMENT

Your sticky statement is one pithy saying that expresses your lesson objective in a memorable way. If you have done the hard work of focusing your lesson objective down and making it specific and simple, that will make creating a sticky statement much easier.

There aren't a ton of rules for sticky statements. They don't have to contain everything from your objective as they can be just something that helps students remember the rest (i.e. something to jog your memory). It should be something repeated often enough throughout the lesson that people who hear the lesson instinctively know what it is.

With that said here are the most important facts about sticky statements.

- *It needs to be really "sticky":* The catchier they are, the easier it will be for students to take action on the content of your lesson. If it's Saturday and they heard the lesson on Wednesday but can still remember your sticky statement then you've succeeded! Imagine your sticky statement as the duct tape that holds your lesson together. The stronger the sticky the more powerful the lesson.
- *It should fit well within each of your points and applications:* a good test for a great sticky statement is to see if it can fit well at the end of your sub-points and at the end of your applications.
- *Spend major time on your sticky statement:* In many ways your sticky statement is the most important part of your lesson. If you don't nail it, the rest of lesson will suffer.



#### PRO TIP

THINK OF YOUR STICKY STATEMENT LIKE THE SUBJECT LINE OF AN EMAIL. YOU WON'T OPEN AND READ THE EMAIL IF THE SUBJECT LINE DOESN'T IMMEDIATELY GRAB YOU.

- *It should be shorter:* although this isn't a hard and fast rule (some longer sticky statements can work) for the most part the longer something is the harder it is to remember. Therefore, keeping it short often works better.

There are several different ways to make a sticky statement. Here are a few:

**Rhyming** | Put words together that rhyme. This is probably the original sticky statement. However, it can feel “campy” and “childish.” In which case, if you are writing for high-school students this may not work well. On the other hand; memory is the key here. If it makes the sticky statement more memorable it might be worth the risk.

Examples:

- Who you know is how you grow.
- When you change your position you change your condition.
- Pay attention to the tension.
- Spiritual failure is seldom an explosion; it's usually an erosion.
- What you say is whom you portray.



### PRO TIP

DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE HALF RHYMES IN YOUR STICKY STATEMENTS. THESE ARE TWO WORDS THAT SOUND LIKE THEY RHYME BUT DON'T COMPLETELY.

Using half-rhymes or b-rhymes can be a powerful method for creating sticky statements. While words that rhyme completely can sound cheesy and sing-songy, half-rhymes sound interesting and well thought out. Most songs today are written with half rhymes. For a great website to find both rhymes and half-rhymes use **B-RHYMES**. Simply type in the word you are trying to rhyme and hit search and you'll see a host of words that rhyme both in part and in whole.

Examples:

- Make disciple your greatest title.

- Treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.
- Oneness is God's dream for us.

In this above example the words disciple and title don't really rhyme. However, they both share the same hard “l” sound in the middle making them a half-rhyme.

**Echoes** | An echo repeats an important word or phrase in the beginning of a phrase and at the end. Probably the most famous is John F. Kennedy's statement, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” If your main point is built around a contrast this type of sticky statement can speak volumes. The repetition of a phrase within this type of sticky statement helps drive home the point and helps the audience remember the point.

Examples:

- Forgiven people forgive.
- The purpose of work is to show God is at work.
- Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.
- Whoever finds his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
- To whom much is given, much is required.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Peacekeepers want to make everyone happy; peacemakers want to make everyone healthy.

**Alliteration** | Everyone loves it, and everyone uses it. It's also one of the easiest ways to craft a sticky statement. Simply use words that start with the same letter.

Examples:

- Your soul is more important than your stuff.
- It's not delivery it's DiGiorno.
- Real relationships require rare sacrifice.
- God's grace turns your weakness into a weapon.
- God's power is greater than your past.

One of the best ways to build alliterative sticky statements is to look for words that start with the same letter as the key word in your lesson objective. You could just sit around and thinking about words that start with the same letter or you can use this tool. It creates a massive list of all the words that start with whatever letter you enter. While you may not find the right word from this huge list it often helps you think of a word that would fit.

**Contrasting ideas** | Use words like far and near, deep and wide etc to drive home a point. As with echo this type of sticky statement can work wonders for truths that are opposite of what the world might teach a student.

Example:

- It is finished, but it's not over.
- Poverty comes from being far from God not short on cash.
- God can do a lot with just a little.
- Labels lie but the truth sets us free.
- A valley doesn't mean a wrong turn.

**Modifying Popular Sayings** | The idea here is to take a popular saying that most of your audience would recognize and then modify it to fit your truth. If it is close enough, you can keep it familiar and therefore easy to remember but shocking. If you change it enough. Both of these help people remember your sticky statement. Jesus uses this type of sticky statement in His sermon on the mount when He says, "You have heard it said..." He then quotes one of the ten commandments before saying things like, "if you look at a woman with lustful intent...you have committed adultery." In this way Jesus was using the command that everyone had heard and changing it to make a much deeper point about the heart of the command.

Examples:

- Jesus is the change that you wish to see in the world.
- Love speaks louder than words.
- Don't judge the Bible by it's cover.
- Drastic sin calls for drastic measures.
- Every cloud has the silver lining of God's love.
- There's a method to God's sovereign madness.



### PRO TIP

SPEND TIME CREATING 2-4 STICKY STATEMENTS. THEN COME BACK TO THEM A WEEK OR MORE LATER AND SEE WHICH ONE SOUNDS THE BEST TO YOU GIVEN THE DISTANCE OF TIME.

To get a great list of some of the most used idioms look [HERE](#), and another [HERE](#).

Hopefully you noticed in these examples that God's Word uses sticky statement all the time! Jesus used them in almost all of His sermons because they are one of the most effective means to help people remember truth out there.



### PRO TIP

REPEAT THE STICKY STATEMENT EVERYWHERE THAT YOU CAN FIT IT INTO THE LESSON IN A LOGICAL WAY.

Once your sticky statement is done, use it everywhere you can in your lesson. Start by including it at the end of your Hook. You can start by using it as an introductory statement that naturally leads you from the Hook section into the content section of the lesson. If you've created a good sticky statement, it can naturally function as a transition statement from Hook to Content. Repeat your sticky statement at the end of each of your sub-points in the content section. If each of your sub-points flow from one single focused idea then this should work very well as your sticky statement should restate that idea in a catchy way.

You can also repeat your sticky statement in each of your application points. This isn't necessary and doesn't always work but if you can do it, you should!

# 3. SET IT UP

Finally, repeat your sticky statement one last time at the end of your lesson to bring the lesson full circle and get one more mention of your sticky statement into the listeners minds.

## LESSON TITLE

With so much talk about the power and importance of a sticky statement let's talk about the lesson title. The title is simply a marketing tool. It is used to generate interest for both students and leaders about a lesson. Therefore, you don't need to spend huge amounts of time on crafting it.

Also feel free to craft your title from your sticky statement. If you've created a great sticky statement you might be able to use it verbatim for the title. You could also modify your sticky statement just slightly to create the title. Similar to the lesson objective it's important to make your title clearly state what the lesson is about. However, for marketing purposes it's helpful if the title is catchy and interesting. Again, you can use your sticky statement as a great title.

## THE HOOK: GRABBING THE AUDIENCE

6 MINUTES OR 15% OF THE OVERALL LESSON TIME SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE HOOK SECTION.

The goal of the introduction or "Hook" section of the lesson is to grab your audience and make sure they come along for the ride. To do this you should answer this question for the student, "why should I listen to this lesson?"

The hook is a section that can help students understand how the content of the lesson will connect with their everyday life. Whether we want to admit it or not, people are always asking, "what's in it for me?" The more powerfully we answer that question, the easier it will be to grab students attention right off the bat.

Another way to think about the Hook is to try to go from the known to the unknown. Jesus was a master at this. He often used imagery and illustrations taken right from the everyday lives of His listeners. He then used those everyday things they knew very well to draw out spiritual truth from God and drive it home in their hearts. We can do this with students as well. Using examples and illustrations from things they know very well to become a bridge to the spiritual truth that might be more abstract. We'll talk more about illustrations later in this guide but one effective way to start a lesson is to begin with a very vivid illustration that shows the power of the Biblical truth in a person's everyday life. This can be in the form of a video, an object lesson, or a story.



### PRO TIP

SOMETIMES THE MOST EFFECTIVE HOOK IS ONE THAT SIMPLY BRINGS UP PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD. WHETHER THROUGH STORIES OR THE MORE GENERAL "WE'VE ALL SEEN PROBLEM \_\_\_\_\_ IN THE WORLD."

At the end of the day we believe that the Word of God can solve every problem that a human can possibly face. One of the goals of the Hook is to help draw

students attention to problems in their own life and in the world around them. We don't have to manufacture these problems, or talk about them as if the "sky is falling." You can be assured that students already notice these problems and think about them. The hook then, can be a place where you bring those thoughts to the forefront and then powerfully present God's Word as the solution to the problem or the answer to an important question.

With all of that said, it is important that your hook is powerful and engaging. Creativity and connecting are the goal not content communication. If you've done a good job at refining your objective and crafting a great sticky statement let those speak for themselves. Instead, spend your time thinking through how you can grab the audience so they "lean forward" and want to hear the rest of the lesson.



### PRO TIP

TIE THE HOOK IN THROUGHOUT THE LESSON AND ESPECIALLY THROUGHOUT THE APPLICATION AND DECISION POINTS AT THE END. DON'T BRING UP THINGS THAT ARE NEVER REFERRED TO AGAIN.

The Hook should also be something that is referred to throughout the lesson. If you use a story in the Hook show how it applies to each of your sub-points. Try tying it in throughout your application. If you've spent time crafting a great hook, use it over and over as an anchor for the more abstract truth that is shared throughout the lesson. The best hooks can apply to all the different parts of the lesson. No need to come up with new illustrations if your original story from the Hook can suffice. This can aide the student in remembering the Biblical truth and save you time since you wouldn't have to create a brand new illustration.

For example, in a lesson on discipleship, the story of Shaq and his college coach and mentor Dale Brown was used as the hook. The story illustrates the relationship and power of a mentorship relationship and the writer used it as a jumping off point for the idea of discipleship. That same story was used to illustrate other important points of discipleship such as the closeness of the

relationship and the trust between the two men. While those points were made using Scripture, the story of Shaq and Dale was used as an illustration throughout to highlight those points.

## THE CONTENT

The content of the lesson is the main course. It's where your single specific Biblical truth is fleshed out and expounded on. You should probably not have more than 3 sub-points in this section of the lesson if you are going to follow the time given. These are sub-points because you should have just one single truth for your lesson. These sub-points then should all revolve around this single idea and help students understand it in greater detail.

15 MINUTES OR ABOUT 50% OF THE LESSON TIME SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE MAIN LESSON CONTENT.



### PRO TIP

START WITH AN OUTLINE BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR ENTIRE LESSON. THAT ALLOWS YOU TO BE MUCH MORE AGILE IN THE WRITING PROCESS.

As you craft your outline for writing your lesson ask yourself, "do my sub-points add new ideas to the main point or do they help to explain it?" The goal of the content section is to take students deep into your main point as explained in your objective. Throughout your study of God's Word in preparation for writing your lesson, filter everything through your main idea. If what you are reading and studying helps you understand that idea better, then it probably belongs in the lesson. If it takes you off into new territory, then it belongs "on the cutting floor."

This is where you'll dive deep into the study of God's Word to really get a handle on your topic or your Biblical truth, passage, or character. Tim Keller in his book on preaching explains that there is no substitute for reading a breadth of ideas on a given subject. The more commentaries you read or books you use for

study, the more ideas you can glean for insight into God's Word. There is no shortcut for really studying God's Word. The goal is that you as a writer fully understand in your own mind what the important truth is. The clearer it is in your mind, the easier it will be to communicate that truth to the audience.



### PRO TIP

**“A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pews.” – Dr. Howard Hendricks**  
EXPECT AND MAKE A PLAN FOR THE FACT THAT YOUR IDEA  
WILL BE WATERED DOWN BY THE TIME IT MAKES ITS WAY  
INTO YOUR LISTENERS MINDS.

One of the ways you can overcome this “dispersion effect” in your teaching is to run your lesson's key points and illustrations by someone else throughout the process. We often get stuck in our own ways of thinking and things that we think are crystal clear are really muddy and confusing. You can't assume students have the same understanding of Scripture that you as a writer have. By the time you've finished your study, you will have more knowledge on that topic of Scripture than most students will have on the whole Bible!

## DEFINITIONS

Certain Biblical truths cannot be explained without explaining some Biblical definitions. If you have a lesson on God's Grace, then the word Grace needs to be defined Biblically. Often Biblical definitions are radically different from the definitions that a student might have in their own mind. It's important to deal with these differences head-on.

However, the balance to that is that life-change is the goal. Which means more time needs to be spent explaining your one point, illustrating it and especially applying it. In most lessons there just isn't time to clearly explain and define three or four definitions. Instead try to choose just 1 or 2 that are foundational to your main point and clearly define those. On the flip side, if you feel you can explain your main point without defining something that is fine too.

There's no need to make your lesson feel like a seminary class by cramming in a ton of definitions. In seminary the goal is clear Biblical understanding not necessarily life-change. Since life-change is our goal, it can often be better to leave those Biblical definitions “on the cutting floor” and focus more on illustrating your sub-points instead.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Pretty much every book you read on preaching and teaching explains the importance of illustrations. Jesus Himself spoke almost completely using parables (a form of illustration). That being said we often still under use illustrations or use wimpy ones. One of the main benefits of the one-point lesson is that every illustration can drive home the same single point. It strengthens all of your illustrations if they can all relate in some way.

Illustrations help you make abstract truth (spiritual truth) into a physical reality your audience can relate to. It's often hard for us to take spiritual truth seriously. We often can't see spiritual truth at work in our own lives because it is essentially invisible though it affects our entire life.

Spiritual truth is like gravity. It has a huge impact on how things behave yet you can't see it.

It is a major force in the world but it remains invisible. It is hard to relate to gravity without describing its effects. We can describe gravity by the way it makes things fall. In the same way spiritual reality must be described in the way it affects our everyday life. This is essentially the purpose of illustration. Take an abstract spiritual truth that is invisible and connect it to a concrete experience in our lives. When we do that in a lesson, we've made God's truth literally come to life.

As humans we have a lot going against us. Not only is spiritual truth invisible, we are also predisposed, because of the Noetic effect of sin, away from recognizing it as the cause of our problems. Without powerful illustrations connecting spiritual truth to real-life emotional experiences we often won't be able to communicate the abstract truth and life-change becomes impossible. One classic example of this is Jonathan Edwards's sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. He describes our inability to use good works to overcome

God's wrath as a spider web stopping a falling rock.

We've all experienced how flimsy a spider web can be. We also recognize how powerful and immutable a rock is. We get it, a spider web cannot stop the force of a falling rock. However, we may not realize that our good works are just like that web and God's justice is the rock. Our works do as little as that web to stop God's righteous judgment. Until we are faced with this illustration, it is hard to understand the reality that our good works are useless. We may instead feel as though they do help us.

Illustrations also bring together the logical and emotional. God tells the Prophet Nathan to confront David about his sins of murder and adultery. Instead of walking up to David and confronting him outright, he uses an illustration built from an experience that David hadn't had. He describes the story of a touching relationship between a poor family and their lamb. Then explains how a rich man steals their lamb for a feast so that he could appear generous to a traveling stranger.

Nathan then uses David's own fury at the immorality to drive home the point in his own life. He says, "you are the man." David had done that very thing and yet could not see that spiritual reality in his own life. He was ignoring it and was utterly blind to it. Not until Nathan shows him his sin in someone else and he so obviously condemns that sin, can he see it in his own life.

That is what a great illustration does. In effect Nathan is saying, "You see the injustice in this story, what you have done is just like that." The feeling he had just had in the story is now attached to his own actions. That connection allows David, for the first time, to see his sin for what it really is and the truth is finally able to penetrate his own heart.

Another example of how to use illustration is 1 Peter 5:8. Peter says Satan "Prowls like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." This is a vivid image because we all know lions are powerful creatures capable of great harm. However, the image goes much further and deeper.

He is a powerful lion, one that you should be wary of, but he is also on the prowl and roaring. He is hungry, angry and on the hunt looking for someone to kill and devour. This illustration connects the abstract truth of Satan being powerful and dangerous to a real experience that we can relate to.

It also instructive about who Satan is and his mission. He isn't ok to play with. You don't mess with a lion, and you especially don't mess with a hungry lion on the hunt. We all instinctively know that's an easy way to get killed. Great illustrations not only connect abstract truths to concrete reality, they are also instructive and help us understand the abstract truth further.



### PRO TIP

THE GOAL OF AN ILLUSTRATION IS TO STIR THE EMOTIONS AND ILLUMINATE THE MIND. EVALUATE EACH OF YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHECK IF IT PASSES THESE TWO TESTS.

Here are three more ways to use illustrations to strengthen your main point:

- *Analogy*: Analogies compare the properties of two things together. One your listeners know well and the other they do not. One of the most popular example floating around today is using the analogy of the moon to describe how we reflect God's glory. We shine as we reflect the glorious light of God's glory in the same way the moon is bright only because it reflects the light of the sun.
- *Examples*: Examples clarify the logical implications of what you are saying. You can give examples of what it looks like to be generous from specific stories. You can give examples of what it practically looks like to "die to sin" by describing how someone walked away from a sinful decision. The only danger of examples is that they can working on the emotions without also helping the understanding. However, examples are great at taking the audience from "fuzzy land" to concrete reality.
- *The Word Picture*. Use just a phrase or even a simple word to link an abstract concept to a concrete experience. David does this powerfully throughout the Psalms. One example is the phrase, "Taste and see that the LORD is good." He could have just said, "God is a good God". Instead he says in effect, "God is a like the most amazing meal you've ever had, if you would just take a bite!" That takes the abstract idea of God being good and uses the word picture of a great meal to make it concrete. We can all relate to the feeling of tasting an amazing meal. It not only helps us put God's goodness in context of everyday life, it also

explains what it's like to experience God's goodness. When you walk away from an amazing meal at a new restaurant you tell everyone about it. You re-live that experience in your mind.

The beautiful thing about using these kinds of illustrations is that they don't take a ton of time and they can really spice up your lesson text. In other words, they help keep your lesson from being boring!



### PRO TIP

PRO-TIP: USE ANALOGY, EXAMPLE, AND WORD PICTURES TO SPICE UP YOUR LESSON WITHOUT ADDING A TON OF CONTENT TO THE LESSON ITSELF. IT WILL HELP THE AUDIENCE UNDERSTAND MORE CLEARLY YOUR MAIN POINT AND MAKE YOUR LESSON MORE INTERESTING AT THE SAME TIME.

Spend time on your illustrations. An illustration can make or break your lesson. A great illustration can compel a student to act and take an abstract truth and make it real for them. Since life-change is our goal, illustrations must be used to great effect. Many times a great illustration is the only part of a lesson a student will remember.

## LESSON DYNAMICS

Lesson shouldn't be boring, stuffy or feel like an academic class. Lessons should be alive, entertaining and engaging. To that end, it is important that some sort of lesson dynamic be used in each lesson to keep students engaged throughout the lesson.

This can be an object lesson, a game, break-out groups, video or whatever else you can come up with. There aren't any set guidelines, just that there should be some kind of dynamic used at some point in the lesson. If you've crafted great illustrations, those can often be turned into a great object lesson. Maybe instead

of telling a story to illustrate your point, you use a video of the story.



### PRO TIP

PUTTING YOUR LESSON DYNAMIC IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR LESSON, AROUND THE 15 MINUTE MARK, CAN GREATLY INCREASE YOUR LISTENERS ENGAGEMENT. TOGETHER WITH THE HOOK AT THE BEGINNING IT CAN MAKE THE LESSON FEEL VERY SHORT AS LISTENERS ARE RE-ENGAGED.

Break-out groups can be a great way of making students think through things on their own with a group before coming together to hammer home your main point. If you are using the scales of justice as an example or how we sometimes think of our good works balancing our sin; use it as an object lesson.

You can create a game to illustrate a point as well. Maybe you are illustrating that without rules we cannot have freedom. You could invent a weird game with specific rules then allow everyone to break the rules. The students will experience how frustrating the game is and realize how important rules are. This would meet both criterion for a great illustration and be a great lesson dynamic to keep things fresh.

## APPLICATION

The goal of teaching these lessons is to compel students to make spiritual decisions. One way we evaluate our lessons for success is if students actually take action on the lesson throughout the following week. Many times however, lessons remain in the realm of abstract truth. You could call this "fuzzy land." Ask a student right after the lesson if they know exactly what to do with the truth they've just heard. If they answer, "No" then there's more work to do in the application department.



## PRO TIP

YOU CAN'T ACT ON WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE. THE CLEARER AND MORE CONCRETE YOU MAKE YOUR APPLICATION THE EASIER IT WILL BE FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE IT OUT. SINCE COMPELLING STUDENTS TO ACTION IS THE GOAL, SHOOT TO MAKE YOUR APPLICATIONS CONCRETE.

We have to take abstract, fuzzy concepts and turn them into a concrete reality that a student can act on. Often preachers write lessons or sermons they leave the work of application to the Holy Spirit. You might hear them say something like, “Listen to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and follow it.” It is your job as the writer to help the students understand how apply the truth in the lesson. We aren’t discounting the work of the Spirit but instead enhancing it by clearly explaining what it looks like to obey in light of the specific point you are making.

With that being said, you should make application throughout the lesson. While you should stick to one single point of truth in your lesson, you shouldn’t stick to one single application. Most truths have dozens of applications and you can bring those out throughout the content section as you prepare your sub-points, illustrate them, and explain them. The more application you include the less likely it is that your audience will get lost in “Fuzzy Land.”

8 MINUTES OR ABOUT 35% OF THE LESSON TIME SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE APPLICATION SECTION.

Application is so important that it’s good to build a section into the lesson structure to make sure there is enough time for application. 8 minutes is normally enough time to cover 3 separate applications well. You could also cover 2 applications in greater depth with the same amount of time.

The goal of the application section is to give students concrete ways to apply your single point. Having multiple applications allows you to hit different types of students within the same lesson. For example, a lesson on God’s grace can take time to call unsaved students to salvation because of the free gift of salvation.

But it should also call saved students to rely more fully upon God’s grace in their everyday lives.

Having multiple applications can also allow you target both genders. You may decide to have one application for girls and one for guys if your point should be applied differently. For example, if one point was about the root issue of seeking escape from the problems of life you may talk to girls about cutting, and to guys about wasting time playing video games. These are two specific applications that could flow from the one truth.

It can be tempting to want to add new information in this section. Don’t do it! You can bring in new Scripture to support your application, but you shouldn’t bring in new information. That’s what the content section is for; to explain your main point clearly. If by now you haven’t done it effectively, it’s too late! Adding a new point in here at the end can happen without you even realizing it. If that happens it can absolutely derail a very focused lesson and give students something else to think about right before the end. This would cause major distraction and hinder the goal of compelling students towards life-change.

## THE DECISION

The decision section is one basic takeaway that anyone can do to apply your main point. It’s the single simplest and clearest action from the one point that you’ve been making throughout the lesson. It is something that anyone can do to apply the single truth you’ve discussed in the lesson.

1 MINUTE OR 3% OF THE LESSON TIME SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE DECISION SECTION.

There isn’t much time built into this decision point. Use the application section to set up your decision and make it a logical decision to take based on the applications you’ve discussed.



## PRO TIP

DISCUSS THE APPLICATION THAT CONNECTS WITH THE DECISION POINT LAST SO THAT IT LOGICALLY CONNECTS THE TWO SECTIONS TOGETHER.

3 Rules for a great decision point:

- *Make it concrete:* No one can change in Fuzzy Land. Make your decision point a concrete action that any student can take that week.
- *Make it actionable:* Your decision should be something that doesn't require other steps. Make it something a student could literally do that night if they wanted to. Or something they could do that week.
- *Make it accountable:* If it is concrete the student's small group leader can ask them specifically about whether they have or have not taken that action that week.

## SOME EXAMPLES

- One Point: Let the Father be your fortress

Decision: Write down on a 3x5 card what you are trusting in besides God. One time this week pray and ask God to help you trust in him instead of that thing.

- One Point: Spirit Baptism Unites us as Believers

Decision: Choose one person in the group tonight that you don't know well and purposefully get to know them better. Ask them questions and ask for prayer requests.

- One Point: The filling of the Spirit helps us avoid hurting others

Decision: Read 3 passages of Scripture this week to get God's Word into your head. (It was discussed in the lesson that Spirit filling in Scripture is described as getting God's Word into your head and heart.)

- One Point: The Spirit gives every believer a spiritual gift

Decision: Commit to volunteer to a specific ministry from a list (leaders were told before the lesson to create a list of opportunities for students to volunteer for)

- One Point: God's love shows us how to have loving relationships

Decision: Decide on something you will sacrifice to show someone you love them. (This was described more specifically in the application and decision point to make it more concrete.)

- One Point: God's grace gives us power when we are humble

Decision: Tomorrow, before you start your day, pray and ask God to help you through each specific thing you will face that day.

# 4. HELPFUL RESOURCES

These are some final things that will make your lesson extra effective in both the planning and teaching stages.

## THE MEMORY VERSE

Scripture Memory is a vital Christian growth principle. To that end, every lesson should have a single verse or several verses highlighted for the students to memorize.

It is important that the verse you select be one that was covered well within the body of the lesson. Don't choose one verse for Scripture Memory and then choose another passage completely for the content of the lesson. Instead, when your lesson is finalized, select a key verse or verses to be the Scripture memory verse. Ask yourself, "what one verse would help a student to internalize this truth if they were to memorize it?" Let that question help you decide which verses should be selected as the memory verse.

The length of the passage chosen for memorization doesn't matter. However, it is better if the passage is shorter to make it easier for students to memorize the verse. But the goal here is to support the main point. If your main point needs a larger section of Scripture, don't hesitate to select a larger section to be memorized.

Along with the Scripture memory verse, you should also write a short question that can help a student remember the content of the verse. This is used on the verse cards that are printed but it serves a greater purpose as well. These question can be used by students when they face situations in their everyday life.

For example in this lesson on the Wisdom of God the key verse was 1 Corinthians 2:7, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory." The question written was, "Who has a secret hidden wisdom?" This question helps the student remember a key phrase from the verse and can help them remember when they do Scripture Memory given only the question as a reference point. However, it also serves to remind students where they should go to get true wisdom: God.

## CHECKLIST

The checklist section of the lesson includes any materials they might need to teach your lesson the way you have it written.

For example, if you created a really interesting object lesson using a soccer goal where students will try to score a goal while blindfolded then your list would look something like this:

- Soccer goal
- Soccer ball
- Blindfold
- A PowerPoint is available for this lesson

If you included some kind of video or audio in your lesson, you need to remember to have a screen to show the video or a speaker system to play the audio. Even if you think something is painfully obvious, you should still list it here in detail.

This section allows the you to scan the lesson with little prep time and get everything ready the night before the lesson will be taught.



**YOU DID IT**

That's it! If you made it this far you have just prepared a start-to-finish lesson. Congratulations: that's no small feat! It takes study, hard-work, and creativity to write a killer lesson, so when you've made it this far, stop and give yourself a well-earned pat on the back.

# 5. TECHNICAL DETAILS

There are some important details that need to be covered about the writing process that don't fit into the writers template that we just finished covering. We will now cover those things in detail here to round out your lesson writing knowledge. Many of these sections will be brief but each one is important.

## WRITING LESSON SUGGESTED WORKFLOW

Here is an example of a suggested workflow for how to write a killer lesson. This isn't a hard and fast rule, just a workflow that helps you think through each part of the lesson in a logical way. It also helps you rely on previous work you've done so no work is repeated.

### 1. Take the main topic and decide on your one point.

- Try to refine your one point into its simplest essence so that you understand it and can communicate it clearly.

### 2. Take your point and craft an objective statement from it.

- Take your one point and include a major application. These two pieces together will become your objective.

### 3. Create your sticky statement from the objective.

- Go back to your main point, and use it along with your objective to craft your sticky statement. If your one point is simple crafting a catchy sticky statement should be easier. Try to state just the "core" of the idea in the sticky statement.

### 4. Select a main passage and verses you will focus on for the lesson.

- Now that you know where the lesson is going, select a passage that you want to focus on to make your point. This may be reversed depending on what type of lesson you are teaching.
- If you are teaching a more exegetical lesson based on a Bible book, you would already have a passage and you would be choosing which verses you wanted to focus on. If you are doing a topical lesson, or theological lesson you'll have to decide which passage best teaches the idea.
- Select a Scripture memory passage and write the question for it.
- Choose the verse(s) that contains the single point that you will be covering. Whittle it down as far as you can. Use that passage as your memory verse then

think of a question that will help students remember the verse and help them use that Scripture in real life situations.

### 5. Study the main point and select which sub-points will best explain the one point.

### 6. As you study, copy down the resources you use.

### 7. If any terms need to be defined, copy those words down.

### 8. Check the glossary for definitions for terms that need defining.

### 9. If no definition exist currently, write your own Biblically defined definition.

### 10. Select main applications and choose supporting Scriptures if any.

### 11. Decide what your decision point will be.

- If you've already selected your main application then the decision should simply be a concrete action that stems from your main application.

### 12. Work on the Hook and other illustrations.

- With the main content set turn toward more creative type work. Think through which sub-points or application points need to be illustrated for clarity. At the same time work on the Hook. Often illustrations become great hooks and vice versa.

### 13. Think through what your lesson dynamic will be.

- Select one of your illustrations as your lesson dynamic or add a lesson dynamic into the lesson. More disruptive lesson dynamics (such as breakout groups) need to be planned on from the start and so this step would come sooner.
- The majority of the time however, this is a good step to look through your lesson to find a good lesson dynamic.

### 14. Create the check-list for the teacher listing everything they need for the lesson.

- Look through your lesson

### 15. Create a general outline as you do the preceding steps.

- Create a “bare-bones” outline that you will write the lesson from. As you decide on sub-points, application, illustrations, decision and hook make sure to update your outline.
- It’s a good idea to keep a running outline as you tweak your lesson so that changes can be made quickly throughout the process.

### 16. Write your lesson from start to finish.

- Now that all the “work” is done take your outline and write it up as if you were teaching to a group of students.
- Make sure to write “teacher’s notes” as you write your lesson to explain how to do things such as lesson dynamics or illustrations for your future use.

### 17. Read through your lesson and make adjustments.

- Once you’ve written a rough draft read through the lesson once and make small adjustments that you see.

## HELPFUL TIPS FOR LESSON WRITING

You probably noticed that in almost every section, one of the pieces of advice was “spend time doing this.” Although the lesson writing process itself can be short, the time should be long. You can take time to think about a great sticky statement. You can spend time meditating on a great way to illustrate a point. However, these things can be done in the midst of your life when you aren’t actively writing your lesson. The actual time spent writing your lesson can be short if you give yourself time to think and meditate on key areas that will make your lesson successful.

For example, clarifying your main point and making it into a specific, clear objective will save you massive amounts of time in your study. Let your objective be a framework for what will or won’t make it into your lesson. Then commit to not studying things that don’t line up with your objective. Writers often waste time studying things that will never make it into the final lesson.

## STOP WHEN YOU HIT A SNAG

Often as you are writing, studying, or creating illustrations or sticky statements you will hit a creative or mental wall. It happens to everyone! Maybe you have writer’s block or you feel your lesson lacks the clear purpose it should have. Maybe you have a sub-point that you know needs a really compelling illustration but have no good ideas for what it could be.

In these cases STOP! Don’t keep forcing yourself to write and waste time banging your head into a brick wall. Instead, get the correct tool to shred that pesky wall! Over time we’ve discovered that the best way to break through these kinds of walls is to get help. Many times this is God’s way of drawing your attention to the fact that you need help. Instead of being stubborn and continuing, be humble and ask for help.

## GET HELP

You’ve probably heard the phrase, “it takes a village to raise a child.” This is true of a great lesson. It takes a team to craft a life-changing lesson. Let’s use caps here to be clear; YOU CANNOT WRITE AN AMAZING LESSON WITHOUT HELP. It is prideful to think that on your own you can write the best lesson possible. That simply isn’t true. Lesson writing is a team sport! You need at least one other outside perspective to help you think through the point and subpoints, applications, illustrations, and Hook of your lesson.



### PRO TIP

FIND SOMEONE YOU CAN DISCUSS YOUR LESSONS WITH AT A MOMENT’S NOTICE. WHENEVER YOU HIT A WALL OR GET WRITERS BLOCK CALL THEM UP AND LET THEM HELP YOU GET UNSTUCK.

You need someone else's frame of reference to help you see the logical leaps in your lesson that aren't strong enough, illustrations that aren't clear enough or just to give you different ways of thinking about certain things. Have a woman (or man) look at your lesson! Many times as writers we get stuck in our gender. We need the opposite gender to come along and help us think like a girl or guy. Since both will be present in most lessons it's helpful to have their opinion.

The best lessons are always a result of team-work and a joint effort. Find someone right now that you can call at any time and ask them about every aspect of your lesson. Don't choose someone busy or someone who won't get back to you. It should be someone who will drop what they are doing and help you for 30-50 minutes on the spur of the moment.



### PRO TIP

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS A WRITER AND FIND OTHERS TO HELP YOU MAKE UP FOR YOUR WEAKNESSES.

Most writers have strengths and weaknesses. Very few writers are really good at every step in the lesson writing process. Maybe you are better at theological arguments or explaining deep truths in easy to understand ways. Maybe you are naturally gifted at coming up with great illustrations. Personally I have become a go-to person for crafting great sticky statements. If you know you struggle in a certain area, try to find someone who is gifted in that area and have them help you.

Lean on others to make your lesson the best lesson it can possibly be. Not only will it take your lesson to a whole new level of awesome, but it will also save you a boatload of time.



### PRO TIP

REALIZE THAT YOU WILL WASTE MOST OF YOUR TIME WORKING ON THINGS THAT YOU ARE WEAK AT. TO BE THE MOST EFFICIENT YOU SHOULD FIND OTHERS TO OVERCOME YOUR WEAKNESS WITH THEIR STRENGTHS.

## CUT MORE, ILLUSTRATE MORE

Has this ever happened to you before? You finish your study with dozens of pages of material that are amazing and you want to try to pack all of it into your next lesson or sermon. Yep. It happens to everyone who takes lesson preparation seriously but it can be a huge detriment to crafting a life-changing lesson that compels students to action. Why?

Because less is more. You've probably heard the classic acronym KISS "Keep It Simple, Stupid". This can apply to lesson writing as well as other things. When it comes to the formation of your final lesson let this be your reference guide. Cut more content, illustrate more.



### PRO TIP

MORE ILLUSTRATIONS AND LESS CONTENT MAKES A LESSON CLEARER AND MORE APPLICABLE.

The idea is to take a single point incredibly deep. Most times that means illustrating in more places. Or spending more lesson time on illustration to be sure that certain sub-points crucial to understanding your main point are as clear as they can be.

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## **YOUR FREEDOM AS A WRITER**

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Hopefully this guide will be helpful to your lesson writing process. However, this is just a guide. It isn't meant to dictate everything you do or get you stuck in a box that you feel you can't break out of. The goal of every lesson is to compel students to act on God's Word. Do whatever helps you write the best lesson possible with that goal.

Feel free to use this guide as a reference but there's no need to follow the workflow described here. There are a few specific things that will be beneficial, and those are outlined in this guide, but everything is up to you as a writer.