

What abiding lessons would you teach men who are committed to expository preaching that will sustain them for a lifetime of ministry?

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: QA89

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First of all, make sure that every expository message has a single theme that is crystal clear so that your people know exactly what you are saying, how you have supported it, and how it is to be applied to their lives. The thing that kills people in what is sometimes called expository preaching is randomly meandering through a passage.

Second, when you go into a church that is not accustomed to exposition, realize that a period of training the listeners is needed. You must move your flock from whatever they have been hearing into thinking logically, rationally, and even deeply about the Word of God. This is the process of weaning them from whatever they have been on and whetting their appetites for the meat of God's Word.

Next, you need to go in with a long-term perspective. My dad said to me years ago, "I want you to remember a couple of things before you go into the ministry. One, the great preachers, the lasting preachers who left their mark on history, taught their people the Word of God. Two, they stayed in one place for a long time." Those are two good pieces of advice.

When I first came to Grace Community Church, everybody used to say I would only last about a year or two—they saw me as a communicator. But in my heart, I knew I wanted to do two things: one was to teach the Word of God systematically and the other was to do it in the same place over the long haul. I knew that was the only way I could nourish people who would be really doctrinally solid.

Fourth, realize that as you begin to unfold the Scripture, your ministry is going to change. You cannot know everything that the Bible is going to say unless you have dug deeply into it. You may think you have everything wired, but four or five years into your ministry, you will come to a passage that will change the way you think about a certain issue and the way your church does things. You and your people must allow the Word to shape your church.

For a insider's look into John's pastoral heart, consider the audio series [*Insight into a Pastor's Heart*](#), a rare opportunity to hear what makes him tick.

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