

---

# GROWTH POINTS

---

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

---

## Preaching for Growth

The Apostle Paul told Timothy to “preach the word” ( 1 Timothy 4:2). So, what kind of preacher brings God to mankind and mankind to God? What kind of preacher creates an atmosphere where growth can occur?

### *A Call From God*

Growing churches have pastors who are called to preach. Paul encouraged Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God” (2 Timothy 1:6). Pastors who desire to see their church growing must fan the flame of their calling to preach.

God calls pastors in numerous ways, but all have a combination of the following four aspects of call. Taken together these four items comprise a call to preach.

1. A sense in their spirit that God wants them to preach. It’s a mission they can’t give up.
2. An awareness of effectiveness when they preach. It’s an “ah-ha” experience that convinces them they were born to preach.

3. An affirmation from mentors and others around them. No one is called in a vacuum; all are called in a matrix of people, a congregation of like minded others who affirm the gift of preaching.
4. A congruity of circumstances opens doors of opportunity. A spouse is willing support you, a friend recommends you to a church, a preaching ministry is available, etc.

Pastors of growing churches operate from a sense of call rather than a feeling of drivenness. They know they are stewards not owners.

Driven preachers act as though they own the people; called preachers act as stewards of the people.

### *An Attitude of Authenticity*

Pastors of growing churches let the people see them as real human beings.

What inspires people is not hearing about a pastor’s knowledge or administrative skill or leadership ability; it’s seeing them as people who struggle with life issues as all Christians do.

People see the pastor as real, as authentic, when they are allowed to peak into their family, work, and spiritual life. One does not need to share intimate life details, a small peak to let others know you struggle too, goes a long way to inspire others.

### *A Presentation of Excellence*

Every craft or skill is backed up by practice. If you desire to play the piano, for example, you'll practice playing scales. Hours of playing scales makes the finger muscles limber and strong, as well as creating muscle memory so playing piano pieces comes easily.

What are the scales that pastors must practice to become better preachers? Well, they must preach. Take every opportunity to preach that you possible can. Research has shown that it takes around 5,000 hours of practice to become good at about anything. How many hours a week do you actually preach? How long will it take you to amass 5,000 hours? Other scales include the spiritual scale - your quiet time; the intellectual scale - your reading time; the intercession scale - your prayer time; the relational scale - your people time; the writing scale - your think time.

How are you at practicing your scales?

### *A Clear Message*

Evaluating a pastor's preaching is difficult. A sermon is a creative act - a subjective thing. However, a few aspects to analyze for effective communication are . . .

1. Is it biblical? The pastor is responsible for the content of the message. Make sure it flows out of Scripture and remains true to Scripture.
2. Is it prepared? For most pastors, developing a good message takes no less than 15 hours. Are you putting in the time?
3. It is clear? Does the message have a point? Do you restate the point at least 3-5 times throughout the sermon?
4. Is it illustrated well? Stories engage people. Support each major point in your message with a story.
5. Is it action-oriented? Give two ideas on what to do following the message.

The bottom line of preaching for growth is engaging people.

How well are you engaging them?



**Growth Points** is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2023 ISSN 1520-5096