

High-Level Research for a Topical Sermon

Karl Deenick - Shopfront 2015

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Over-prepare

- Do one topical series a year where you over-prepare
- Start a year out
- The key to a good topical sermon is reflection.
- Collate material over the year. Anything you read. E.g. newspapers, magazines, blogs, books, commentaries. Record anything you read that might be helpful
- It's not so much about carving out huge slabs of time to do research over the year. But about starting early so you can gather things along the way.

Tools:

- Evernote
 - Great for web clipping, etc
 - Photograph pages of books
 - Setup a notebook for the series.
 - Tag items as well for future reference
- Zotero
 - For bibliography geeks
 - Also great for web clipping

Where to Start Looking

- Bible Dictionaries—great summaries of topics.
- Theological Word Dictionaries (if your topic is closely tied to a set of words). Remember James Barr's critique!
- Journal articles because they are short, succinct and heavily footnoted.
- Find where the topic is referenced in the Bible. Exegete the passage. Look up commentaries.
- Excurses
- Check out the Gospel Coalition. (book reviews, Themelios, resources)
- Read broadly. Read the newspaper. Read magazines. Look for articles that might intersect with your topic.

Reading Books

- Find books early and choose only a few.
- Read the book over the next year or so.
- Take note of useful series: NSBT, Paternoster BM, etc

Reading and Researching Well

- Don't read whole books. Read wisely, not completely.
- Read the intro and conclusion of the book, chapter.
- Skim
- Follow up footnotes. (This is where a good library or access to a good library is useful).

Listening to Sermons

- Can be helpful...but slow
- Can give insight into how to apply topical sermons

Keep up to date all the time

- This is the best preparation.
- Read Broadly. Have a program of reading.