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Reflection and Growth Plan

CD 601 OA

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As a student of the Proclamation and Communication class this semester, I have had the opportunity to be introduced to effective communication skills- verbal, personal, and written. The class has given me a deeper understanding of how to craft, prepare, and deliver effective messages and has allowed me to develop my public speaking skills. Throughout taking this course, I developed personal skills, confidence, and techniques to share my ideas and visions. Most importantly, it taught me more effective ways to develop and deliver sermon. I've learned how to properly study a passage in its context so I can preach God's ideas with Biblical fidelity. I was very challenged to live the kind of life that makes the messenger worth listening to.

In the beginning, my initial expectation for this class was low. But throughout the course, my feelings for this class have evolved tremendously because of what was being taught. I loved listening to the weekly presentations and for me, they were sermons of itself. Every lecture was an 'Ah-Hah' moment and was a reminder of God's goodness. The series on passage analysis were a great challenge for me as a leader because it was a reminder that in the end, it's the job of the Holy Spirit. Preaching, delivering message, speaking words into people's heart... God takes all the credit. I am just a tool that God uses to do His work on earth.

Ever since I was young, I've struggled with pride- wanting approval and receiving compliments for the works I did. I've always been a leader and I appreciated being recognized for my achievements. Through past seasons of humbling experiences, God was at work with this area of my life. This class was another reminder that God is pleased at those who are humble.

Working with group members and posting on the discussion board was tough for me. I found almost all of them seemed to be very articulate and punctual on all topics, writing down honest feedbacks very seamlessly. Sometimes, I would worry that my comments needed more explanation or didn't make sense. Through this discussion board, I knew that posting comments and giving feedback was an area that I needed to improve on. After all, sharing my thoughts online is another way of communicating so I am thankful I had this opportunity.

As a woman of God, I have sought to deepen my relation with God and to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Throughout my life, my faith has been a cornerstone of my identity but the struggle was in setting aside a quite time for Him daily. As a newlywed, a head manager at my job, leader in college ministry, worship team member, part-time student, and etc., I faced tremendous difficulty in trying to find the priority in life. I couldn't find the balance between ministry, work, school, and home. For quite some time, I thought having different role meant having different identity. I slowly began to notice that spending time with the Lord was no longer my priority. I witnessed division and feud within my church and I was let down with a few personal relationships too. I was on an emotional roller coaster from being completely okay to being depressed in a matter of 10 seconds. I was bitter against my circumstances and my heart was full of complaints rather. I didn't feel capable enough standing in front of the college students preaching the word of God when I wasn't even living what I was preaching, so I started doubting this path I was taking. I began to question the vision that God had planted in my heart in a very negative way.

But in the midst of these overwhelming crisis, God graciously met me and reminded me that I had one identity- that is child of God. No matter where I was and what I was doing, Christ is in me and I am in Him. It wasn't a new concept but this basic truth was a daily reminder and

the anchor that grounded me. I learned to stand firmly as a woman of God thanking Him for the very little things in life. As I prepared sermon and as I dived deeper into the word, I realized He was using me because He was strong when I am weak.

In communication, I see improvement on delivering the message. I gained confidence that after my preparation has been done, the final delivery and touching of the hearts will be essentially be done by the Holy Spirit. I have gained more passion about the Word and I'm beginning to incorporate more appropriate, meaning gestures. I sense a vocal variety in pitch, punch, pause and pace especially because I am having fun sharing the gospel. Not only that, but I'm beginning to pay attention to my transitions between points so that they are clear and smooth. Through the lecture, I've learned that transitions are crucial where they show us where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. They clearly outline the talk for us and tie us to the main idea. Most importantly, as a preacher and a leader, I realize that it's solely my responsibility to go deeper into the Word and fully wrestle with it first so that I can be clear on what the main idea of the Scripture is. I find that the more I sit with the Word, the content has more depth.

Another area where I have seen growth in communication is in my ability to show compassion and forgiveness. I believe it is important to extend forgiveness when someone has wronged us. I realized that proclamation and communication is portrayed not only in what I say but, in my actions, and the choices I make. Recently, I was placed in an unfair situation where I was blamed for something that was not true. I found that in the midst of gossip and chattering, the best way for me to communicate truth is by staying silent and praying to God. I eventually received a sincere apology which was at first very hard to accept. However, I could only think of Jesus and the way He has forgiven me every time I kneel down.

As much as I've learned and improved, there are so many future improvements needed in my preaching, communication, and in ministry overall. Being part of this class was one of many humbling experiences. Like mentioned before, I realized that giving both positive and negative feedback were important for not only for the other students but for myself. I didn't think organizing my thoughts and sharing them would be so challenging. The same principle applies when preaching- sharing thoughts in an organized way. Another challenge I found was correct analyzation of the passage. Dr. Ream had mentioned not to give Sunday School answers, which many Christians are too accustomed to. I've noticed that the passage analysis exercise was quite tough for me because I wasn't wrestling with the text enough. This is the first area I have started working on and the power in the preaching is definitely different the more deeply I study the text beforehand.

Vision casting also needs improvement. My vision statement deals with the fact that young people are walking away from the church in large numbers than ever before. I listed a strategy for reaching this next generation of young people- inspire, faith in action, and creating an environment. However, a strong vision cast encompasses the four components of vision: reality, vision, strategy, and following through. I didn't clearly state the specific points of these components. I need to ask more questions such as: Why do we need to change? What is the preferred place that following this will take us? What are the steps or items we need to do to get us to this place? How will I manage the dream? and etc. If I can answer these questions, my vision cast will be greatly improved. I must remember that vision cast is not a sermon. It is an invitation for others to join me in my journey.

Another area I can improve on is to familiarize myself with current issues that may be relevant to the audience. One of the students in my discussion group discussed the issue of

TikTok in his sermon. I found the sermon to be more memorable because I many of the younger generations and teenagers are familiar with TikTok. If I familiarize myself more with topics that are relatable to the audience, the message can be more impactful. I hope to change how people view real life situations so that their perspective can be transformed into that of someone who lives for Christ. Not only TikTok, but dealing with topics such as war, gun-control, politics, finance, marriage, etc. should be with the mindset of Christ. Last but not least, I pray that I never negotiate with the world or alter my message just to please the crowd. While it's important to create a welcoming and inclusive space, it's important as a preacher to address different issues only through the lens of the Word. The very standard should be the Word of God.

In conclusion, this Proclamation and Communication class has been an eye-opening experience for me. Throughout the semester, I have learned about the importance of effective communication in both personal and ministry settings. I have also developed my own communication skills, including active listening, having confidence, articulating, and empathy. In particular, I have appreciated the opportunities to practice these skills through the various class assignments. Seeing the discussion posts of others was very encouraging and I learned a lot of the materials from those inputs. Looking ahead, I plan to continue to apply these communication skills in my daily walk with the Lord while in ministry. I pray that I can present the Word of God better than the day before.