

***Illustrations for Biblical Preaching***, Edited by: Michael P. Green, Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1989. (19 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

### **1. Accidents**

When a cowboy applied for health insurance, the agent routinely asked if he had had any accidents during the previous year. The cowboy replied, “No. but I was bitten by a rattlesnake, and a horse kicked me in the ribs. That laid me up for a while.” The agent said, “Weren’t those accidents?” “No,” replied the cowboy, “They did it on purpose.”

The cowboy realized that there are no such things as “accidents.” How much more so should the Christian who understands the sovereignty of God have the same attitude. (Page 16)

### **2. Adoption**

A new mother stayed with her parents for several days after the birth of her first child. One afternoon she remarked to her mother that it was surprising the baby had dark hair, since both her husband and she were fair. The grandmother said, “Well, your daddy has black hair.” To which the daughter replied, “But, Mama, that doesn’t matter, because I’m adopted.” With an embarrassed smile, the mother said the most wonderful words her daughter had ever heard: “I always forget.”

All Christians are adopted children of God who are accepted by God with the same unconditional love that this mother had for her daughter. (Page 16)

### **3. Anger, Effect of**

Anger is often more harmful than the injury that caused it. The story is told of the time when Leonardo da Vinci was working on his painting “The Last Supper” and became angry with a certain man. Losing his temper, he lashed the other fellow with bitter words. Returning to his canvas, Leonardo attempted to work on the face of Jesus but was so upset he could not compose himself for the painstaking work. Finally he put down his tools and sought out the subject of his wrath and asked his forgiveness. The man accepted his apology and Leonardo was able to return to his workshop and finish painting the face of Jesus. (Page 20)

### **4. Anger, Righteous**

“A man that does not know how to be angry does not know how to be good. A man that does not know how to be shaken to his heart’s core with indignation over things evil is either a fungus or a wicked man” (H. W. Beecher). (Page 20)

### **5. Anxiety**

Victor Hugo said, “Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones. And when you have finished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake!” (Page 21)

## **6. A Four-Year-Old Girl's Comfort**

A doctor had to give a painful shot to a four-year-old girl. When she learned what the doctor was about to do, her face showed her anxiety and her body tensed. As the doctor picked up what looked to the little girl to be a needle large enough to kill an elephant, she turned her eyes to her father, who then took her hand and fixed his eyes on hers.

An expression of confidence and calmness came on her face. She knew she was not alone and found comfort, not in her father's spoken answer, but in his presence with her in her time of trial. (Page 21)

## **7. Apology**

Do you know what is the best way to have the last word in an argument?  
Apologize! (Page 23)

## **8. Apostasy**

You can tell the sheep are in trouble when the shepherd starts speaking kindly of the wolf! (Page 23)

## **9. Apostate**

One writer said of apostates, "One is reminded by way of contrast with the Lord, whom these men deny. He is the rock of our salvation; they are hidden rocks, threatening shipwreck to the faith. He comes with clouds to refresh his people forever, they are clouds that do not even bring temporary blessing. He is the tree of life, they are trees dead. He leads beside still waters; they are like the restless troubled sea. He is the bright and morning star heralding the coming day; they are wandering stars presaging a night of eternal darkness." (Page 23)

## **10. Rugged Missionaries Needed**

A mission society is reported to have written to David Livingstone: "Have you found a good road where you are? If so, we want to send other men to join you." Livingstone replied: "If you have man who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all." (Page 72)

## **11. The Man Who Never Quits**

The following is attributed to Theodore Roosevelt:

"It's not the critic who counts, not the one who points out how the strong man stumbles or how the doer of deeds might have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred with sweat and dust and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, if he fails, at least fails

while daring greatly, that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat. (Page 87)

## **12. The Value of the Poll**

Harry Truman once commented on the importance of polls to leadership, with the following insight: “I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he’d taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he’d taken a poll in Israel? Where would the Reformation have gone if Martin Luther had taken a poll? It isn’t the polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong and leadership—men with fortitude, honesty, and a belief in the right—that makes epochs in the history of the world. (Page 215)

## **13. The Art of Leadership**

General Eisenhower would demonstrate the art of leadership with a simple piece of string. He’d put it on the table and say: “*Pull* it and it will follow wherever you wish. *Push* it and it will go nowhere at all. It’s just that way when it comes to leading people. They need to follow a person who is leading by example.” At another time he said, “You do not lead by hitting people over the head—that’s assault, not leadership.” (Page 216)

## **14. Missionaries**

“It is a mistake to suppose that dull and second-rate man is good enough for the heathen. The worst-off need the very best we have. God gives His best, even His only begotten Son, in order to redeem a lost world. The most darkened and degraded soul need the best thinking.” [Adoniram Judson]  
(Page 245-246)

## **15. Heart without Words**

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart [John Bunyan] (Page 272)

## **16. Prayer, Importance of**

D.E. Host, the man who took over for Hudson Taylor, wrote a book titled *Behind the Ranges*. He was trying to analyze a problem he had seen while working in two different villages in China. The people with whom he lived and worked were not doing very well.

But the people in the other village across the ranges were doing great! He visited them only now and then, but they were always doing fine, so he began to ask the Lord what was going on. How could those across the ranges be doing better than those with whom he lived and worked? The Lord showed Host the answer. Although he was spending much time counseling, preaching, and teaching with those with whom he lived, he spent much more time in prayer for those across the ranges. He concluded

that there were four basic elements in making disciples: (1) prayer, (2) prayer, (3) prayer, (4) the Word—in that order and in about that proportion. (Page 277)

### **17. The Difference between Christianity & Worldliness**

The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. People who are not praying are playing. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A worldly Christian will stop praying and a praying Christian will stop worldliness. Tithes may build a church, but tears will give it life. That is the difference between the modern church and the early church. In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethren, let us pray” [Leonard Ravenhill]. (Page 277-278)

### **18. Prayer and Bible Study**

“Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the Word gives emotional life. But a full measure of both the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life” [Attributed to Andrew Murray] Page 283)

### **19. The Examination of a Missionary Candidate**

One snowy morning at 5:00 A.M., a missionary candidate rang the bell at a missionary examiner’s home. Ushered into the office, he sat three hours past his appointment time waiting for his interview. At 8:00 A.M. a retired missionary appeared and began his questioning.

“Can you spell?”

Rather mystified, the candidate answered, “Yes, sir.”

“All right, spell ‘baker.’”

“B-A-K-E-R.”

“Fine. Now, do you know anything about numbers?” the examiner continued.

“Yes, sir, something.”

“Please add two plus two.”

“Four,” replied the candidate.

“That’s fine,” said the examiner. “I believe you have passed. I’ll tell the board tomorrow.”

At the board meeting, the examiner reported on his interview. “He has all the qualifications for a fine missionary. First, I tested him on self-denial, making him arrive at my house at five in the morning. He left a warm bed on a snowy morning without any complaint. Second, I tested him on promptness. He arrived on time. Third, I examined him on patience. I made him wait three hours to see me. Fourth, I tested him on temper. He failed to show anger or aggravation. Fifth, I tested his humility by asking him questions that a seven-year-old child could answer, and he

showed no indignation. So you see, I believe the candidate meets the requirements. He will make the fine missionary we need.”

Spirit-given abilities are needed, but Spirit-produced fruit is more significant. (Page 354-355)