

# Questions to Help You Evaluate Your Radio Scripts

## **1. THEME: Can you state your script's theme (its central idea, main meaning) in one simple sentence?**

If you can't, your message will not be clear, focused, direct, or effective. When you are studying a Scripture passage to write a script, take time to summarize the meaning of the Scripture passage into one sentence. This is hard work, but if you do this, you will have the theme for your message. Everything in your message should support your theme.

## **2. PROGRESSION: Does your message move naturally from point to point? Will the outline of your message be clear to your audience?**

Many messages are confusing. They begin talking about one topic, then quickly change to another idea. The points of the message do not connect together in a simple, clear fashion. This is why it is important to have a single, simple theme sentence (main idea) for your message. If you write a short message, your theme will be the only point of your message. But if you write a longer message, each point of your message should be an explanation of part of your theme. And make sure to use 'transition sentences'—sentences that show the relationship between one point and the next.

## **3. AUDIENCE: To whom are you speaking in this message?**

*Some messages are for believers.* They are messages to help your believing listeners grow in faith and love. They are urgent pleas for churches to be faithful to the good news of Jesus. Followers of Jesus accept the authority of the Bible. If your message is faithful to the Bible, believing followers will probably accept it. That is the freedom and opportunity you have when you address Christians.

*Other messages are for unbelievers.* These messages invite unbelievers to trust in Jesus. They defend Christian teachings. They challenge false beliefs. Unbelievers are not likely to believe a message just because it comes from the Bible. You will need to show them why the Bible is right. The Holy Spirit will convince people of truths about God, sin and Jesus.

Choose to whom you will speak with your present message, to believers or unbelievers. Don't try to attempt too much with one message. You can always write a second message to say what else needs to be said to your other listeners.

Each message has lessons and truth for both believers and unbelievers. Each listener can come to faith by hearing the Word of God about many subjects.

**4. GOAL: What is the goal of this message?**

2 Timothy 3:16 says that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” This gives us four possible goals for our message:

	<b>Changing Beliefs and Ideas</b>	<b>Changing Behavior and Attitudes</b>
<b>Teaching people what is right</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Teaching</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Telling people true ideas and beliefs)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Training in righteousness</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Teaching people behaviors and attitudes that are acceptable to God)</p>
<b>Teaching people what is wrong</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rebuking</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Showing people how their present ideas and beliefs are wrong and need to change)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Correcting</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Telling people their current behavior is unacceptable to God and needs to change)</p>

You should try to only have one goal for each message. You should be able to state that goal in one simple sentence, such as:

“The goal of this message is to teach my listeners that God forgives sins (1 John 1:9).”

or

“The goal of this message is to promise...”

“...to comfort...”

“...to explain...”

“...to urge...”

**5. BALANCE: Does your script balance the ideas of challenge and comfort?**

Some preachers and script writers are always telling their people how to live. They emphasize the demands of the gospel. They emphasize the judgment of God. They tell people how important it is to repent. Other preachers and producers are always talking about God's love. They use comforting words. They help people who are hurting. Their message is about joy and promise and eternal life in Jesus.

Our messages need a balance of both of these. Both are important. We are sinners, and we need to repent and follow Jesus. But more importantly, we are also hurt and broken people, and we need to hear good news of God's promises to comfort and cheer us. We need **hope**.

Below is a chart contrasting the two sides of the good news of Jesus. If you find your messages only focus on one side of this chart, then your message is uneven, and you need to correct the imbalance soon!

And, as we said earlier, the goal is to present good news and hope. Even when you talk about items in the left column of the chart below, you will want to speak in positive and appealing words. Our goal is not to make our listeners feel sad or ashamed. Our goal is to lead them to new life in Jesus.

For example, God's anger is good, not bad. We should be thankful for his anger, not fearful. His anger shows that he loves us. He doesn't want us to stay in sin because the result of sin is death and trouble (Romans 6:23). So God expresses his anger against people who sin, to help them.

The challenging parts of the message of Jesus	The comforting parts of the message of Jesus
God's wrath and judgment	God's love and patience
God's law	God's grace
Sin	Salvation, forgiveness and acceptance
The cross	The resurrection
Repentance (turning from sin)	Faith
Sincere sorrow for sin	Joy, worship and praise
The demands of the gospel	The promises and benefits of the gospel
Hell	Heaven

**6. CHRIST: How does your program relate to Jesus Christ?**

When you try to understand or explain a Bible passage, you should always keep in mind the larger message of the Bible. You should see how your passage fits into that larger message. Many times you will speak on topics or on Old Testament verses that do not mention Jesus directly. But you should still be able to explain how your topic is connected to the good news of Jesus. This will help keep you from saying things about your topic or passage that contradict the gospel or the meaning of the Bible as a whole.

## **7. APPLICATION: Is your message application faithful to what the original writers intended?**

Sometimes in their desire to make the Bible helpful for the lives of their listeners, pastors and writers have applied verses in ways that the original writers of the Bible never intended. They give inappropriate attention to minor details in the story. Or they hold up Bible characters as positive and negative examples when the original writer did not wish to do so.

We need to make sure that our application of the Bible is faithful to the intent of the writers of the Bible (and the God who inspired them). To do this, there are helpful questions we can ask, like:

- What does the verse say? What did it mean for its original readers? What does it mean for us today?
- What did the writer want the original readers to do or think as a result of reading these verses? How would he want us to apply his words today?
- What problems do we face today that are similar to the problems addressed by these verses? How are they similar? How are they different?
- If the original writer heard my application of these verses, would he say it was faithful to what he wrote?

Here is an example of a thoughtful Bible application that is faithful to the thought of the original writer:

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:26 and other verses tell us to “Greet one another with a holy kiss.”
2. When I study the historical background of the holy kiss, I discover that the holy kiss was a sign of Christian reconciliation between people who were in conflict.
3. In my country we do not reconcile with each other by kissing. Instead, we show that we desire to renew our relationships by \_\_\_\_\_ (hugging, sending cards, writing letters, etc).
4. In my message I should stress the need for Christians to overcome their conflicts with each other and show their renewed love for each other by \_\_\_\_\_ (hugging, etc).

## **8. NEED: How does this program address a need your listeners have?**

Bible messages are more effective when they speak about needs people have and feel. People are more willing to listen if they see the message will help them in some direct and meaningful way.

But what about the spiritual needs that many people don’t know they have, like the need to be forgiven by God? When you speak about such needs, you will need to show your listeners that they have this need. Then, when they see they have these needs, they will be ready to hear how the good news of Jesus meets these needs.

## **9. CLARITY: Will your listeners be able to understand this script?**

We have training and knowledge that many of our listeners do not have. It is easy for us to unknowingly include words and ideas that our listeners can’t understand.

Try to write your radio messages at a level of language that all people will understand. Use

illustrations to which most of your listeners can relate. Beware the danger of using special Christian words that many of your listeners will not understand. But do not “speak down” to them (speaking to them as if they were little children). Use words that all adults understand.

#### **10. CONSIDERATION: Is your message kind and considerate toward your listeners?**

We have the obligation to criticize wrong behaviors and false teachings that are contrary to the Bible and the good news of Jesus. But we must do so in a loving and courteous way. We should not name people or religious organizations in order to criticize them. Rather, we should focus on the false beliefs and behaviors and show our listeners that the good news of Jesus is better.

Also, we should emphasize the GOOD in the good news. That is why our organization is called Words of *Hope*. We have a message of hope. If we need to mention a false teaching or behavior, it should only be out of a desire to lead people to a better way.

**Unacceptable:** “Islam is evil because...”

“Jehovah’s Witnesses are wrong because...”

“The Dalai Lama is a false prophet.”

**Better:** “The teaching that all people will go to heaven is wrong. Here is why.”

“The Bible condemns the practice of astrology.”

**Best:** “The Bible tells the good news that we are not locked in a cycle of ‘karma’ and reincarnation. Jesus offers eternal life in paradise to all of his followers.”

“Why pray to the Virgin Mary when the Bible tells us that we can pray directly to God himself? We don’t need people to serve as mediators between us and God, because we have direct access to God. Isn’t that wonderful?”

Also, do you use illustrations that connect with all the members of your audience? Some adult, male speakers only use illustrations that adult males can identify with. What about the women in your audience? What about the children? What about the elderly?

#### **11. INTEREST / VITALITY: Is this script interesting?**

Too many Christian messages are dull and boring. They make their listeners yawn and fall asleep! But the Word of God is a powerful, life-changing message. Here are several things you can do to make your messages more captivating for your listeners:

1. Try to create suspense and surprise. If they think they know what you will say, they will lose

interest.

2. Use stories that make the message clear and more interesting.
3. Use personal testimonies: how has this truth helped other people?
4. Show your listeners how it helps them—what are the benefits of believing and living this way?
5. Use the active voice, not the passive voice. Instead of saying, “A good time was had by all,” say “Everyone had a good time.”

## **12. TOPICS: Are there topics or themes in the Bible that you are not mentioning in any of your programs?**

All preachers and script writers have their favorite topics and themes. Some like to talk about the cross. Some like to talk about the church. Some like to talk about love. That is understandable. But we need to be as thorough as possible in our broadcasts. We must not skip over certain topics just because they are unpleasant to us. We need to announce the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). On the next page is a list of topics. Think about your messages and ask yourself if there are any topics you have not addressed. This is a good way of finding potential topics for future messages. Tell us if there is a topic for which you would like scripts and resources.

### ***Doctrinal topics:***

*The Bible:*

*how God inspired it; its authority; overviews of the story that runs through the Bible)*

*What God is like:*

*God's love, patience, power, knowledge, wrath, etc.*

*The Trinity*

*Creation*

*Providence:*

*how God cares for the world and directs it*

*Miracles*

*Angels, demons, Satan, the occult*

*Human nature, image of God*

*Sin and temptation*

*Christ is both God and human*

*The incarnation, Christmas*

*Christ's death, the atonement*

*The resurrection and the ascension of Christ*

*The Holy Spirit:*

*what he is like; gifts of the Spirit; fruit of the Spirit;*

*Regeneration: how God makes us his children*

*Justification: how we are made right with God*

*Faith, repentance and conversion*

*Sanctification: how we grow spiritually*

*The church and the sacraments*

*The second coming and future events*

*Death, judgment, eternal life, heaven, hell*

### ***Practical topics:***

*Our study of the Bible*

*Stories about well-known Bible persons*

*Loving and following God (discipleship)*

*Prayer, trusting God, making decisions, finding*

*God's will*

*Worship / Praising God*

*Truth, Christian teachings, our thoughts, knowledge and minds*

*Answering objections of unbelievers / Problem of suffering and evil*

*Virtues, integrity versus hypocrisy, perseverance in the face of opposition*

*Our feelings (emotions)*

*Our words and speech*

*Christian love and relationships*

*Marriage and the family*

*Money and stewardship*

*Work and Education*

*Societies and Nations*

*Evangelism and ministry, world missions*