

# EMP WERED!

SHARE YOUR MESSAGE. CHANGE THE WORLD.

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Empowering Christian Communicators

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***Success is not measured by the number of people you speak to or the number of books you sell. Real success is doing what God has called you to do ... whether it's to reach one person or one million people.***

**Karen R. Power**

## Your Speaker Journey

Many people get started as a Christian speaker because they have a story to tell. Often they share their story with a small group of friends or at the church they attend. Someone from that group asks them to speak at their church or for their group of friends ... and viola! a Christian speaker is born. Many people think it's really that simple ... but is it ... REALLY?

SCREECH!!! APPLY THE BRAKES! Not so fast Sparky!

All that has happened is this person has shared their story with a few groups of people. There's been no thought or steps taken to ensure this will be anything more than that ... just sharing their story. And yet, often times when this happens the story-teller hangs out their shingle and proclaims, "I am a professional Christian speaker!"

Consider this ... does flying a radio-controlled airplane make you a pilot? Certainly not. At best, it makes you interested in a specific field, an enthusiast, a hobbyist, or an amateur. It takes training by professional pilots and then following their instruction through a training period before getting a license to fly an airplane alone. If they want to be a commercial pilot, it takes more training and certification at a higher level. So why when it comes to speaking do many people think they can go from zero (sharing their story) to the professional level in one easy step? There is confusion and misinformation among people considering themselves to be professional speakers that if they've been invited to share their story or maybe even been paid for just one event that they are now a professional speaker and somehow (they don't know how it works) the event planners will start beating a path to their door.

I'm not trying to be harsh or burst anyone's dreams, yet, I've seen this pattern repeatedly. The end result is the person doesn't reach the expectations they had. Eventually they end up frustrated and/or giving up. Sadly, the world has lost the opportunity to hear this person's story about what God has done in their life. A story that might change someone else's life. To complicate the process, if they do take some steps and attend a speaker or writer conference, often the training they do get sets unrealistic

expectations without giving them solid information and tools to build a strong foundation. FYI ... not everyone who attends a speaker (or writer) conference will become or wants to become a professional ... and that's okay.

If you have a story to tell, topics to teach, or have a passion for a certain area and want to share that with as many people as possible, first:

- make it a given that you have been praying about this, sought wise counsel, and believe this is the path God is directing you to take.
- settle it now that you are convinced you are to do this and willing to work long and hard to see it manifest.
- step back and look at what you should be doing during your first year of speaking. (If you have been speaking longer than one year and aren't getting the results you expected ... keep reading. You might want to go back and shore up the foundation you already have.)

### **Let's look at the 8 steps to start your speaker journey:**

1. Get speaker-skills training by the best in the industry you can afford, preferably someone with a proven track record of developing successful professional speakers. Don't be afraid to learn from speaker trainers who are not a "Christian" speaker. If you want to be a cut above, you might have to find someone who has similar values as you do but has had their success as a professional speaker in other arenas beyond just the Christian arena (and you might find some of these people are Christians too! BONUS!).
2. Get a cell phone, a laptop, internet access for your researching your topic, and a quiet room in which you can work. Treat it like a real job (maybe one day it will be).
3. Develop a speaking presentation based on your story or area of passion and purpose.
4. Practice, practice, practice ... and practice some more (in that quiet room you have). Record yourself and critique yourself. You're not ready for the world to hear you quite yet. Knock off the rough edges of your presentation as much as you can.

5. Create a basic website (domain name = your name.com) that includes your bio, the title and description of your presentation, and contact information. It can be 2-5 pages at the most for now. You will want to be able to send people to your website as you meet them in various places and tell them what you are doing. NOTE: If you are not truly gifted in graphic design or tech skills, hire someone to get you started. Your website, from the beginning, should be professional looking ... not homemade or amateur looking.
6. Create business cards with your name and contact info (include your website URL). Distribute these whenever you have the opportunity or when someone asks what you are doing.
7. Contact everyone you know, churches, local library, women's or men's clubs (depending on your gender), civic groups or schools (if your topic is appropriate) ... anyone who will allow you to do a 20-45 minutes presentation to their group during one of their meetings or luncheons. You will be speaking for no fee at these events, however, in exchange, you will gain experience before a live audience and the opportunity to hear their feedback. This will allow you to tighten up and hone your presentation to make it even better. It will also make you more sure of yourself and have better stage presence. Be sure to continually implement what you learned in step 1. Stay within a one-hour drive of where to live so that you do not over invest in travel expenses. (If you do have a group interested in having you speak that is more than an hour away, ask them to cover your travel expenses and if needed, meals and lodging.)
8. Go out and speak to the groups that invite you and RECORD THE AUDIO OF EACH PRESENTATION. Listen to each presentation. Have a trusted friend who can offer objective feedback listen to them. Hire a coach or mentor to listen them and provide feedback. Then incorporate this feedback into the next presentation you give.  
Repeat.

Do these steps for the first year. Dedicate your time to this as if it were a full-time job ... because that is what you want to be at some point, a full-time, paid, professional speaker ... right?

Do these all of these steps and your plate will be full getting prepared, gaining experience, and honing your speaking skills. If you are focused on anything else during this time (i.e. writing a book, recording videos to sale, etc.), you are putting the cart before the horse.

During this first year, it's all about developing your speaking skills. PERIOD.

***Here's a hint:*** Most speakers in the Christian speaking arena do not do this. They jump into the deep end first and then wonder the rest of their "career" why they aren't getting invited beyond their local radius to speak.

*Talent is a factor in what level market the speaker will be able to serve, but speaking skills are more important for overall success in the business. Positioning and marketing are both important, but you have to have the goods in this business to make it. You can't market your way to the top. Once you get in front of a live audience, it's just you and them. And if you haven't been trained in how to hold their attention, you're dead. No amount of slick marketing will save you. You cannot fake your way to success in this business. Again, you can't be a pretender in this business and succeed. Audiences aren't stupid. You either have the skills or you don't, and if you're not trained when your opportunity presents itself, you're going down in flames. Most new speakers focus on the sexy parts of the business, but the smart ones focus on the most important aspect: their speaking skills. [How to Become A Million Dollar Speaker by Elliott Saltzman]*

If you focus ... really focus ... on developing your speaking skills during your first year ... then you can take the next set of steps to being a professional speaker by setting speaking fees, developing your social media network, growing your website, working on that book proposal or write your book to self-publish, recording that video to sale, and starting to do A LOT of marketing and promotion.



## How to Grow Your Professional Ministry

Do you say you have a professional ministry? If so, are you being mindful to cultivate that ministry, your garden ... or are you spending your time tending to other things? Or other people's gardens?

Anyone in ministry needs encouragement, prayer, and support from others. Yet, so many people (i.e. speakers, writers, other communicators) say they are called of God to reach others with the message he's given them but spend more time in other gardens than their own. Then they wonder why they are not producing the crops they had wanted. Translate that to speaking events or product sales.

***The garden that yields the best crop  
is one that is tended to daily by the gardener.***

**Check your focus.** If God has given you a message to deliver, then do all that is necessary to produce the results He desires. But foremost, your focus must be on God, not someone or somewhere else.

*“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” John 15:4 (NIV)*

**Don't get caught sleeping.** “Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ “An enemy did this,’ he replied.” Matthew 13:24-28 (NIV)

*“I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.” Proverbs 24:30-31 (NIV)*

**Check the amount of time, energy, and resources that you spend on a daily basis.** What takes your time? Are you over-investing in someone else's garden and leaving yours to be pillaged and be less fruitful than it should be? Do you stop to work on your ministry activities and have no energy? Are you doing things that are time-wasters and that do not yield a good return on your investment?

*“And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Lo, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?’”  
Luke 13:6-7 (RSV)*

**Do not go broad before you go deep.** A very wise friend shared that with me many years ago and it stuck. Without a good, deep, and extensive root system, the plant will fail to grow to maturity or produce the crop it should. Many people anticipate the budding and growth above ground and are more impressed with the foliage than the depth and strength of the plant. “He continued teaching. “Watch out for the religion scholars. They love to walk around in academic gowns, preening in the radiance of public flattery, basking in prominent positions, sitting at the head table at every church function. And all the time they are exploiting the weak and helpless.

*“The longer their prayers, the worse they get. But they’ll pay for it in the end.” Mark 12:38-40 (The Message)*

**Cultivate deep roots that will sustain.** You do this by being focused and knowing what your passion, purpose, core message, and audience are and where they are. You do this by working every day, committed, and with a plan for consistency. You do this by finding training to update and upgrade your skills. You do this by finding people with skills to supplement your areas of weakness and those who will allow you to work in the areas you do best ... speaking, writing, developing new product. Finally, you do this by operating your professional ministry with excellence, honesty, and integrity.

*“The good get planted on good land and put down healthy roots.” Psalm 37:29 (The Message)*

**Be present and protect your garden.** If you are everywhere but in your office developing, maintaining, and working, working, working ... your garden will fall into disrepair. Weeds will sprout up. The crops will fail. You will not reach your full potential.

*“Remember how you brought a young vine from Egypt, cleared out the brambles and briars and planted your very own vineyard? You prepared the good earth, you planted her roots deep; the vineyard filled the land. Your vine soared high and shaded the mountains, even dwarfing the giant cedars. Your vine ranged west to the Sea, east to the River. So why do you no longer protect your vine? Trespassers pick its grapes at will; Wild pigs crash through and crush it, and the mice nibble away at what’s left.” Psalm 80:8-16 (The Message)*

**Go from producing some fruit to producing MUCH fruit.** Get the training you need to grow and mature to your full potential. Focus on delivering your message with excellence. Touch EVERY life you are to reach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1:1-3 (KJV)*

**Regularly check every part of your garden.** So how’s your garden ... professional ministry ... growing? When was the last time you stopped and did a good survey of your field? Do you need to refocus, prune, pull some weeds, or water it with the Word of God?

*“The LORD will guide you continually, watering your life when you are dry and keeping you healthy, too. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.” Isaiah 58:11 (NLT)*

## The Art of NOT Self-Promotion

As a Christian communicator have you've been known to say, "I really don't like promoting myself!" Maybe you haven't said that ... but you've thought at some point ... right?

Let's take a minute and clear up one myth specific to Christian communicators ... IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

When a person knows their value (what their message has to offer the listener/reader), and focuses on that value, then promotion becomes about conveying the benefits of that value. It's not about the person delivering the message. The focus shifts to the proper perspective.

It doesn't matter how big of a celebrity you are, people will begin to lose interest, especially in the Christian arena, if it's all about the person. However, many communicators in this arena rarely stop to analyze and decide what their value is.

What is our value? It's the why ... not the how. If we just talk about the how, we're talking about features. But the why is where the meat is, the depth, the benefits.

The bottom-line of our message is to reach a lost world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we just talk about how Jesus died for our sins and forget to talk about why He did ... we leave out the most important part: because he loves us and wants to spend eternity with us.

Stop and reflect about your core message.

Take a sheet of paper and draw a T chart. On one side label it HOW and on the other side label it WHY. Then write down the features in the HOW column and focus on the benefits of your message (what the listener/reader will gain) and write them in the WHY column.

Here's an example of how it would look if Jesus did this for his ministry. The HOW column would include: cross, whips, nails, crown of thorn, Roman soldiers, etc. The WHY column would simply contain: unconditional love, eternal life, grace, peace, forgiveness, etc.

Now ... you're ready to begin promoting **your message** to your audience. Use the information you listed in the WHY column. (If you don't know your audience — hint: it's not "the whole world" as that was Jesus' audience.)

## Believe In Your Value

So many Christian speakers and writers are working toward a goal to provide financially for their needs and that of their families, yet they are struggling to do so. We can attribute part of this to the economy in the United States. We can also chalk it up to understanding one's value on a couple of levels, as well as considering how much money (having it or the lack thereof) influences our Kingdom decisions.

Mary DeMuth (speaker, author, social media marketer) posted the following on her Facebook page.

### What if Someone Offered You Ten Million Dollars?

*K.P. Yohannan, the founder of Gospel for Asia, recounts an amazing story. "I remember well when, during the early days of our ministry, someone offered me all the financial assistance in the world if I would give up my calling and commit myself to advance his cause overseas. The thing that helped me walk away from this distraction was when my wife asked me, 'When the journey comes to an end and you look back, what will you answer? If for the sake of money you compromise your calling and your walk with the Lord, how will you explain this to the people who are following you?'"*

*What a challenge. What a decision. What would you do? If Bill Gates or Oprah approached you with a mind-numbing sum of money to work for any of them, would you do it if it meant walking away from God's clear calling on your life? How much does economics influence your kingdom decisions?*

*I ask that questions to myself as I wrestle to eke out a living at writing (and speaking and creating digital content and blogging and...). I wonder if my pursuit of all these avenues is watering down that which God has called me to do. I wonder how I would respond if someone offered me a boatload of cash to abandon what I perceive to be God's calling.*

*Then I think about the journey God has wooed me to. He's been beckoning the writer in me for decades. For many, many years I wrote unpublished words, laboring in obscurity, wondering if I'd ever have an audience, let alone make ten bucks on my words.*

*My first book didn't hit the bestseller list. Now on book fifteen, I still haven't won any awards, become a bestseller, or achieved fame as a result of my work. I'm glad for that, actually. I would not have liked a Mary who succeeded right out of the gate. She would've become proud and unteachable, no doubt.*

*Still, as bills loom and I peck at the keyboard and wonder how we'll continue to tackle college tuition, the temptation to give into a large sum of money grows. I'm sad to admit it here on the stark white page of this post. I wish I could assure you of my piety. But I can assure of my brokenness. And my heart to do what Jesus wants me to do, despite the temptation.*

*What would you do? What could you do for ministry and God's Kingdom purposes if you were given a large sum of money? Should we focus on hard work and money at all, or should we solely trust God to provide? Is there balance in working and trusting?*

There's a huge difference in being paid to fulfill someone else's vision or being paid to do the vision God gave you and me to fulfill HIS vision for HIS Kingdom's eternal purposes. If someone offered me \$\$\$\$\$\$\$ to focus and do the vision God gave me to fulfill, I'd really consider taking the money to do the work for God's Kingdom ... but I wouldn't take it to build someone else's kingdom.

*I understand my skills, experiences, expertise and what my business/ministry has to offer have value on a financial level. I understand it's worth on an eternal value scale as well. Yet, I'm not in this business for the money, otherwise, I'd be back in corporate America. I'm in it for winning souls for the Kingdom and the eternal value. It takes balance to have both money and do the work for eternal purposes. I'm trying to move forward and be the kind of business owner/ministry leader like the*

*man in Matthew 25:14-30 who when given five talents multiplied them for his master. I believe that God has given us the ability to do work, that we must understand being skillful and the value of the work we do, and that He rewards work that is well done.*

*Do we as Christians have a poverty mentality? Do we swing to the opposite side of the continuum from those with a prosperity gospel mentality? Is there a balance in understanding one's value, making money, and being a Christian? Can it be done? Can we be financially stable and eternally minded?*

### **What are some practical things we can do?**

- Attend webinars and teleseminars led by star performers in the areas of building my business, blogging, marketing, social media, information products, and more. I am continuing to learn and building on my previous knowledge to be more focused in spreading the word about my businesses.
- Combine efforts and energy with that of other Christian communicators who work diligently to spread the word about their messages and create the products/content.
- Be more focused and consistent in your marketing efforts.
- Step up your prayer effort for your business/ministry and those who partner with you.
- Believe that prayer, a consistent work ethic, and trusting God's plan will be worth it in the long run. I don't want to go back to Egypt (uh, I mean corporate America)!

### **Believe In Your Value!**

- Do not sit back and hide the gifts that God has given you to share with others through music, speaking, writing, comedy, blogging, reviewing books, etc. – Christian communication.
- Do not feel *less than* others who are doing similar things. God made you unique .... express and share your true self!
- Do not believe the lies you've told yourself, that others have told you, or that the enemy wants you to believe.



Remember ... You and your message have value! ... financially and eternally.

## Are You Skillful or Talented?

In our modern society, we applaud and put on a pedestal anyone with an ounce of talent. Television is filled with shows for people competing for large sums of money based on their talent. Audiences pay a lot of money to hear a talented singer or speaker, or buy a book by a talented writer.

Instead of just talent, show me someone who has spent time (years maybe — often in obscurity) developing that talent until they become skillful in using it.

God seeks skillful people, not talented people. Talented people are a dime a dozen. Honestly, most everyone has talent of some kind. But few are those who are dedicated, determined, and diligent in developing that talent until they are skillful.

Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary gives these as the definitions for *talent*: (1) a special ability that allows someone to do something well, and (3) people who are sexually attractive.

For the word *skillful*, it gives this definition: having the training, knowledge, and experience that is needed to do something well : having a lot of skill. In 2 Chronicles 2:13-14, God called for skillful men to design and construct the tabernacle:

*“Now I have sent a **skillful** man, endowed with understanding, of Hiram my father's, the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan; and his father was a man of Tzor, **skillful** to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson, also to engrave any manner of engraving, and to devise any device; that there may be [a place] appointed to him with your **skillful** men, and with the **skillful** men of my lord David your father.”*

In 2 Chronicles 34, he appointed the Levites *all who were skillful with instruments of music*:

*“The men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and [others of] the Levites, all who were **skillful** with instruments of music.”*

Rest assured that these people were dedicated, determined, diligent, trained, knowledgeable, and experienced. They were the best of the best. They were building the place where God would abide in the wilderness. Fast forward to today (to whatever day you are reading this post). Think about yourself. If you are a speaker, writer, singer, comedian, blogger, book reviewer, etc, are you talented? Probably. Do you even rely on your good looks to get you by?

Or ... have you spent your time and energy to become trained, knowledgeable, and experienced? Are you skillful?

Should those who carry the Gospel through Christian communication be talented or skillful?

The video below might not be the best at making my point, yet I imagine these people have spent HOURS perfecting their talent into a skill. It took these people sacrifice, blood, sweat, tears, broken bones, stitches, exhaustion, and whatever else through good times and bad to become the best as these things.

Are you willing to spend hours, doing it over and over and over ... through good times and bad ... to be the best of the best ... to be a mouthpiece in God's church, to His people, to those who need to know Him?

Here's the challenge ... if you're talented take it to the next level and become the skillful!

*Remember ... **TALENT is fleeting. SKILL is enduring!***

## Do You Embrace Change?

*“Until the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of changing, you will never change.” ~ Unknown*

Have you learned through the years to embrace change?

Change makes life exciting, never dull, and causes us to branch out and grow deeper, stronger roots. Paradoxically, it also gives us wings to fly.

Changes happen every second in our life ... like standing in the middle of stream. The same drop of water never passes you twice.

Holding on to things, people, projects, places, jobs, etc. that have changed only wastes time and energy. Doing so will only make you sick in your heart, mind, and soul. I know from experience.

Are you learning to take the good from what has changed and is in the past – not looking back – and using it as you go forward to enjoy the journey.

*“... but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” ~  
Philippians 3:13-14 (KJV)*

***Do you embrace change or fight it?***

## How to Become a More Bookable Speaker

An often asked question by speakers is “how many speaking presentations should I have or offer?” Is there a magic number of presentations to offer? Let’s do some math first.

Let’s say the average speaker does 2-4 events per month. In the course of one-year, that would be 24-48 different events or audiences. Some of these events may be keynote presentations while others might be multiple presentations based on a theme or topic. For our purposes, let’s focus on the number of events, not sessions.

Many speakers offer 12-20 (some more) different presentations from which event planners can choose ... and they also offer customized sessions. For most speakers the key focus should not be on offering a plethora of speaking topics or presentations.

### **Hone your presentations for better delivery.**

Using the numbers above, if a speaker speaks 2 times per month, they only speak before 24 groups. If they offer more than a handful of presentation topics, they in no way can speak more than a couple of times on any one topic (if they are equally distributed about the 24 groups.) Delivering a presentation for the first time, or infrequently, tends to make the speaker nervous, and reliant on using notes. The audience often can sense that the speaker isn’t as familiar with the content as they should be. Event planners begin to wonder if they spent their resources wisely on someone who claims to be a professional speaker but comes off as an amateur due to lack of experience with their presentation.

Would a speaker be able to hone 12-20 different presentations very well with only 24 opportunities to do so?

While it’s okay to have a few notes on stage, delivering a presentation many times allows the speaker to know what makes an audience laugh, touches their hearts, or doesn’t work and needs to be removed or tweaked. With multiple opportunities for delivering the same material, the speaker

becomes more confident, relaxed and better able to make a few small adjustments to that presentation for the audience's specific need. Eventually, the speaker can deliver the presentation without notes and speak from their heart, not from a piece of paper.

One of the speakers I've personally worked with and consider a Master Communicator, had 3 core messages. This person could speak to audiences of any gender, age, or anywhere in the world and do multiple sessions on these three presentations. The presentation length could vary from 30-minutes to 3-days. With each audience the presentation was tweaked and made relevant to them. I heard this speaker speak live many times and each time it was basically the same presentation at it's core, but it seemed and sounded fresh.

### **More is not necessarily better, in this case.**

It seems many speakers want to be all things to all audiences when that isn't practical, reasonable, or what they are called to do. When a speaker knows their core message area and where their passion lies, they find a power that only comes from a God-given source. By spreading themselves and their presentations across the board and trying to reach any event planner or audience, they water-down their effectiveness, impact and brand.

Oh, there's that nasty word ... brand. Do you concretely know what your brand is? Can an event planner look at their presentations your offer and see it clearly? Or do they have so many choices that they are unsure as to what you are good at and how that will reach their group's needs?

If you are thirsty for a diet cola ... offering a myriad of carbonated drink choices won't do and you might change your mind entirely. **Information overload!** Yet, give you a clear choice and of you are need to quench your thirst ... are you Coca Cola or Pepsi ... and you can instantly make a decision.

It's the same with speakers and their presentations. The speaker has to know what their brand is, what core message resounds deep in their spirit

and that every audience needs to hear. The speaker may be multiple sessions and those sessions may be tweaked to the specific audience, but the core concepts are the same.

Which brings us to ...

### **Know your audience and their point of need!**

Each type of audience can hear a similar message from your core message group, yet, each audience has a different point of pain or need. Find that pain-point, meet the need, and you have a winner!

Have you ever talked with or surveyed your audience to find and assess their needs?

So often we forget this one very basic and important part in the speaking equation. Instead as the speaker, we give our audiences what WE think THEY need without really connecting with them.

There is a vast wealth of information that can be gathered by connecting to your greater audience via asking questions on your blog and various social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.

Ask them, listen to them, and find where they need help. THEN and only then ... look at your areas of experience, expertise, and lessons learned and offer your voice to their lives.

Take a few minutes to stop and review the presentations you offer.

- Do they all fit your brand?
- Do they all fill your audience's need ... are they filling your need?

If you narrowed down your presentations to a handful of the most effective, most requested, be received and most offered ... that also follow these three tips, you will be more bookable as a speaker.

If you work with a speaker bureau, they can more easily pinpoint the event planners who might be interested in booking someone with what YOU have to offer.

Event planners will be able to totally “get it” when it comes to what you can do for their group and the needs they are trying to fill and goals they are trying to accomplish by bringing in an outside, professional speaker.



## 6 Things to Help Make a Difference in Your Speaking and Writing Career

In a conversation with a speaker and writer who also is the mother of three children, she admitted to being excited about being a mom. She also was equally excited and anxious about really kicking off her writing and speaking on a professional level.

Here are a few thoughts I gave her to consider. For those of you who have raised your children to the point that you are able to leave them for weekend speaking events or they are launched as adults ... keep reading.



I believe family is your first priority ... after God. The kiddos grow up all too quickly. Enjoy them now. You can write while they are in school. Speak at some MOPS/Moms groups during school hours and hone your skills. As you are able, step out further into speaking as the kiddos' schedules allow. So often we want to "be there" and we miss being there for those we love the most. Knock and God will answer and open the doors for you as His plan and timing are always right. Now is the time for you to learn, write, build a firm foundation for your speaking/writing ministry. Many just launch out with no infrastructure for their ministry and then are baffled when nothing happens. Don't worry about speaking before "big" audiences ... that might happen later if it's in God's plan for your life, family, and ministry. I've seen first-hand how speakers have put their careers ahead of their family and then were left to pick up the pieces later of adult children's issues. The Bible says to be a good steward over the little things ... THEN ... he will make you ruler over much. Stay focused on now, be a good steward now, let God figure out how "big" you'll be later.

Matthew 25 shares the parable of the valuable coins in which the master tells the first and second servants upon returning with more coins than originally given, "You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much."

## What are “small things” for a speaker or writer?

In addition to tending to your family when they are young, let's turn the focus on activities that should be a part of any speaker's or writer's day if they consider themselves a professional. Activities such as: regularly posting about your ministry on social media; sending out emails to keep the different groups you're connected with in the loop (e.g. event planners where you've spoken, people in the audience or on your web site who have signed up for your email list, people who have purchased and/or read your books, etc.); working and communicating with both of your agents — literary and booking — if you have either; developing new product; promotion of your message to event planners; promotion of your product; attending conferences, reading books or watching DVD's to hone your craft (speaking, writing and business); writing book proposals and/or the manuscripts, and the list continues. Being actively present in the day-to-day right here and right now tasks to grow your speaking and writing career ... not merely waiting for it to somehow mysteriously appear.

## 6 Things to Help Prioritize Your Next Steps:

1. Keep your priorities and house in order before striking out to change the world! God first, family second, speaking/writing ... hmm... at least third.
2. Build a firm foundation for your ministry (HINT: It is a business and as such should be established on sound business principles and practices.)
3. Focus on being here, present in the NOW. Let God take care of the future of your ministry ... whether you'll be — as several have told me “speaking to thousands in stadiums” — and yet are unwilling to focus on each next step that will lead them there ... wherever that may be. (Chances of them making it? *Only by the grace of God! Bless their hearts.*)
4. Be faithful in the small things. Some “small things” are actually the doorway to HUGE THINGS! Don't miss out because you feel you are “too good”, “too important”, or “beyond that.”
5. Yearn to hear the words that the master spoke to the his servants in Matthew 25:21-23.

6. When you are old, you won't be impressed any longer by the number of books you've written or the number of people who have heard you speak. You will be longing for these days ... when you're kiddos are young, will climb in your lap and give you messy kisses.

Here's what a New York Times best selling author and internationally-known speaker responded when asked if he would rather speak before thousands or a small group. His reply, "I'd rather speak before a small group because that's when I can really connect with the people and share my passion."

Before you've earned the privilege of standing before thousands to speak, or have as many read your books, you will have to spend an inordinate amount of time doing the daily grind. It never ends regardless of where you are in the process. Being a "professional" means having a profession — a vocation — and to be successful and achieve the goals you dream of requires showing up daily and doing the work ... the small things.

## 5 Things I've Learned About Using Hashtags on Facebook

Do you use hashtags when you post on various social media? I have on Twitter but until recently I didn't know that I could on Facebook — **on my professional pages**, not my personal page. I'd like to share some of my results and encourage you to try using hashtags too.

### The Hashtag #

Depending on what decade you were born, this symbol (#) has several names. Many of us (not saying any dates here) know it as either the pound sign or the numbers sign. Both are still true. For those using this symbol on social media, it's known as a **hashtag**.

By using hashtags, you can greatly broaden the reach of your readership.

### Here's what I've learned so far:

- Hashtags need to be relevant to your brand and the content of your post. Examples could be: #Empowering #ChristianSpeakers #Speakers #Writers
- Hashtags broaden the reach of those seeing the post. They take your post beyond where you or others “share” and “like” it.
- Hashtags create or join a page specific to that hashtag. When I used #speakers and clicked on it, initially the posts were about sound system speakers and soon people were seeing those posts as well as posts for those who do speaking presentations. People who wouldn't have gone to this Facebook page before.
- Hashtags related to your brand words should be used consistently ... for every post. This builds and strengthens your brand.
- Hashtags are simply a new doorway on the Internet for people and search engines to find you. Much like tags that make a category on a blog post, the hashtag makes a category of content from everyone using the same #hashtag. People might not click on your URL, but they might on your hashtag ... especially younger readers.

## Where Do You Spend Your Time?

Just this morning, I received an email from a speaker asking about an idea for promoting her speaking to a particular group. She had a great idea! The demographic group that she's targeting needs to hear what this speaker has to share with them. I said "Go for it!" And then added, "Be careful about the amount of time spent promoting to this group as they usually have very little money and if she spends too much effort there, she won't have time to promote to other groups who can pay her speaking fee." There needs to be a plan when promoting your speaking ministry. Consideration needs to be given about the balance of spending money, time, energy and resources versus the return on the investment (ROI).

*"And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" Matthew 25:20-21 ESV*

Where are you spending your promotional time? How much time are you spending? Are you getting any return (i.e. paid bookings) from this effort? Are you being a good steward?

Many speakers are struggling to make ends meet themselves in this current economy. Many speakers also spend their promotional time, energy, and funds either focused on a group that can't give them much of a return on their investment or not sharing benefits and issues they can help solve in their promotion. Both are important.

There has also been a discussion on Facebook this week about using social media in promotion, specifically Twitter. Is it worth it?

"Yes! and ..."

### Four things to consider when planning your next promotional effort:

1. Who is your audience? Are you targeting a specific group, or are you just trying to get anyone who will give you few seconds of their time?
2. Where are these people of this group you're trying to reach? Are they using social media and if so which one(s) do they use the most? Why spend all of your effort on Pinterest, or Twitter, or Facebook, or blogs, if that's not where your audience is?
3. If you can't answer the first two questions, STOP! Get solid answers before moving forward. If you don't know, you will be wasting much of the invest you make in question #4.
4. How much time, energy, and money are you going to spend? If you get at least one booking from this campaign will it be equal or more than you spent? Is the return on the invest equal or greater than the investment?

Where are you spending your time, energy, money, or other resources to reach the audience(s) God has given you to reach with your professional speaking ministry? We have been instructed to be good stewards of the resources that God has given us to reach the world for His glory.

## Should We All Be Teachers?

In the past few years, it seems integrity in our industry has taken a nose dive. That sounds harsh, however, if you're been in the Christian communication industry long enough, you've seen the book deal go sour, or a speaker who pads their expenses for an event, and worse. Before we pick up the phone, pen, laptop, or microphone, let's remember this Bible verse:

*“Don't be in any rush to become a teacher, my friends. Teaching is highly responsible work. Teachers are held to the strictest standards.”  
James 3:1, The Message*

Replace *teacher* with speaker, writer, singer, comedian, trainer, coach, Bible teacher, agent, publisher, ministry leader, etc. — in general, *Christian communicators*, as we all have a function of teaching.

Singer/songwriter, [Christine Vales](#) has a song on her Evergreen album called, “[Oh to be the Moon](#).” It talks about how like the moon reflects the sun, we as Christians are to reflect the Son, Jesus Christ. This song really has been stirring in my heart and mind for the past few weeks. Please take a minute a listen to it.

Unfortunately, our Christian communication industry doesn't have any regulations (maybe it should? Oh yeah, we have the Bible!). Anyone can pick up a microphone or pen and start teaching. That's why agents and editors (for literary agencies, speaker/booking agencies, record labels), publishers, conference leaders, and others who are gatekeepers play a very important role. It's up to us to look at, get to know, and stay in touch with the person behind the pen or mic, and to offer a level of accountability for these people before their message and/or life impacts the masses.

It's time to have an open discussion about this. It's time for some self-examination and God-examination, starting with me, you, and anyone reading this who is willing to do so.

*“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:14, KJV*

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.” Psalm 139:23-24, NAS*

One last thought, for ministry leaders who book speakers on an individual basis working directly with a speaker, maybe they should be concerned in what they are getting — not just the performance on stage, but the whole person. A valid reason for working with a speaker/booking agency. If it's a Christian agency, hopefully, there is a level of screening and getting to know the speaker, as a whole person, and adding a layer of accountability to the process ... helping to ensure, as much as possible, a level of conduct in keeping with James 3:1.



## Are There Advantages to Using a QR Code?

*Visit our website on your SmartPhone / iPhone with this QR Code (yes, there's an app for that!) >>>*



### A real-life scenario

Imagine that you are meeting with an event planner or publisher. Rather than just telling them about yourself, SHOW THEM! Hand them your business card with your QR code on it. Open your cell phone and (have the app ready and easily accessible) locate the QR Code Reader app. Then scan your code and pull up your website on your phone. You can then show them what you have available, play a video, and sign them up on the spot for your email list, and more. A bonus is that they will be impressed that you're using the latest technology to promote your professional ministry. It might be all the technology you know, but they don't have to know that.

### What is a QR Code? The formal answer

*Although initially used for tracking parts in vehicle manufacturing, QR codes are now used in a much broader context, including both commercial tracking applications and convenience-oriented applications aimed at mobile phone users (termed mobile tagging). QR codes can be used to display text to the user, to add a vCard contact to the user's device, to open a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) or to compose an email or text message. Users can also generate and print their own QR codes for others to scan and use by visiting one of several free QR code generating sites.*

*QR codes storing addresses and Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) may appear in magazines, on signs, buses, business cards, or almost any object about which users might need information. Users with a camera phone equipped with the correct reader application can scan the image of the QR code to display text, contact information, connect to a wireless network, or open a web page in the phone's browser. This act*

*of linking from physical world objects is termed hardlinking or object hyperlinking.*

*Google's mobile Android operating system supports QR codes by natively including the barcode scanner (ZXing) on some models, and the browser supports URI redirection, which allows QR codes to send metadata to existing applications on the device. Nokia's Symbian operating system is also provided with a barcode scanner, which is able to read QR codes,[3] while mbarcode[4] is a QR code reader for the Maemo operating system. In the Apple iOS, a QR code reader is not natively included, but over 50 free apps are available with reader and metadata browser URI redirection ability. As for BlackBerry devices, the App World application can natively scan QR codes and load any recognized Web URLs on the device's Web browser. [See Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QR\\_code](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QR_code)]*

## **Why should you use a QR Code?**

Much like your name and face are your brand as a speaker and author, your unique QR Code is just as important in these days of technology. If you have an iPhone or Smartphone and have tried to type in and locate a website, it's not always quick, fast, and/or easy.

Using a QR Code allows the user to simply scan the code and VIOLA! the URL comes up on the screen. In seconds and with ease, the website can be instantly located.

## **How to get a QR Code**

1. Use a QR Code Generator to create the graphic and needed HTML code. You can find one with a simple internet search for the term.
2. Save the graphic and the HTML code that are generated in your computer folder for future use.

## **What do you do with it?**

PUT IT ON EVERYTHING ... business cards, website, handouts, anything, and everywhere. This is now your digital fingerprint.

## How do you read a QR Code?

You will need:

- An iPhone or a Smartphone.
- There's an app for it ... search for QR Code Reader and download it. You can find them for free. Note: Consider using a QR Code that is "private" which means it reads the code but doesn't give out your information.

## Isn't it scary using this technology? Reminds me of "the mark".

Honestly, yes it is a bit scary. However, why not use technology for good ... to point people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to messages of hope and healing, and for positive eternal life change?

If you haven't tried reading a QR Code before, and you have an iPhone or Smartphone, try it. Download a free QR Code Reader app and use the camera function of QR Code Reader. Hold it up to QR Code at the top of this article and let it scan the code. You'll love it!

## The Power of Branding

***Dreaming of Krispy Kreme doughnuts! What's the matter with me? I don't see that enticing HOT sign flashing before my eyes – I'm at home minding my own business! Goodness sakes alive!*** [From a Facebook post by a friend, Barbara Vickery]

Now that is the power of advertising. We all have jingles and images from commercials that are forever stuck in our brains. When we least expect it ... sometimes YEARS later ... they surface. Do you remember the jingle, “*Wouldn't you really rather have a Buick? A Buick? A Buick?*” Where did that come from? How many years had it been since you have heard that one?

Branding ourselves as speakers and authors is the same. Yet, often it's overlooked. The result is there is a HUGE category called “Christian authors” or “Christian speakers”, possibly separated by genre, but otherwise they all look the same.

That's where branding comes in. It differentiates, distinguishes, separates, and shows our unique qualities. When you hear an author's name like Beverly Lewis, Kathi Macias, Francine Rivers, or Carol Kent, you know exactly who they are, what genre, and what as the reader you can expect. That's branding.

Think of it like a two-side coin.

- One side is about you ... your passion and purpose, core message, the value you bring, the genre, your level of excellence, personality, etc.
- The other side is your audience. This is equally as important. Your brand contains elements of them regarding who they are, where they are, when they are available to interact with your message, and what they need.

## Action Item 1

Take out two pieces of paper. At the top of the first one, write the name of your favorite Christian speaker or author. Under their name draw a line down the middle of the page. On the left side, make a list of characteristics that are about that person (see first side of coin above). On the right side, make a list of why you like their speaking and/or writing.

NOW ... Take the second sheet of paper and write YOUR name at the top and draw a line down the middle. On the left, make a list of characteristics that are about you (see first side of coin above). On the right side, ... this might be more difficult ... answer the questions about your audience. If you haven't done that before, take some time to explore and evaluate your audience and then answer the questions above regarding your audience. You might even do a survey or ... just ask them.

NEXT ... is there a pattern forming? Are there a few words that can be used to succinctly and accurately capture who you are and what your core message/purpose is? If so, you are moving in the direction of developing your brand.

Do you prefer Coke or Pepsi? Most people have a preference. It may be based on taste. They may have grown up where one was more prevalent than the other. They might like the commercials of one better than the other. There is no right or wrong answer (unless you're trying to sell Coke or Pepsi). It's the same for speakers and writers.

## Action Item 2

Make a list of your top three Christian speakers or authors. Beside their name write why you like them. Next, write your name. Go and find the emails, cards, feedback sheets from your speaking events, anything that you've received from someone who has heard you speak or read your writing. Make a list of why they enjoyed you.

Combine the words from Action Item 1 with the list from Action Item 2. The picture should be coming clearer about you.

FINALLY ... a picture is worth more than a 1,000 words. Let's "draw" the picture. In addition to having a great professional head shot ... you are your own brand ... is there a graphic or logo that helps capture this "feeling" or enables your audience to see, not just your face, but the core of your message?

Branding isn't always an in-your-face action. It's often subtle. The picture, tune, message, if clearly conveyed can stick in someone's mind ... to surface years later. As Christian speakers and writers, we want our message ... the Gospel of Jesus Christ ... to stick in the hearts and minds of those who hear or read it. We want them to think of it when they are in need of help and healing. We want them to recommend our message in what ever form it is to others who need it. Branding helps them to that! It helps you move out of the pack of "all Christian speakers or writers" to "here's one with the right message for right now!"

## Are You Feeding or Starving?

*“What you feed lives. What you starve dies.” ~ Burt McDaniel*

That quote is true of just about anything ... gardening, our body, our spirit, our business.

Let me share from my personal experience. I have several friends (who are speakers and writers, imagine that) and who along with me have recently started a physical fitness program. We are all doing various types of activities and watching what we eat. As I talk with these friends, we all have in common several things, such as: age, gender, sedentary jobs (many hours in front of a computer), and all are at some stage of menopause. If we do something NOW, and daily, we can manage our weight, energy, and overall health.

How does this relate to speakers who often ask, “how do I get more speaking events?”

Much like getting our bodies in shape, we have to do things to get and keep our professional speaking ministries in shape. Are you feeding your ministry with activities and tasks that generate more speaking opportunities? Or, are you starving it by doing anything but focusing on specific tasks and then expecting healthy results?

“What will you do (or have you done) today to feed your professional speaking ministry?” If at the end of one week, you can give me a list of things you’ve done daily, BRAVO! If not, then read on ... there’s still hope!

### **Ten ideas, or exercises ... little things to do ... and do ... and do ... every day!**

1. Contact a church or organization that might use outside speakers for their events (make a phone call, send an email, and/or drop a note or postcard in the mail).

2. Connect with your audience. (Post something of value on your professional Facebook page, on your Twitter page, and/or on your blog.)
3. Check your web site. Is it up-to-date? Is it the same-old-same-old? Make a change. Offer something for free. Create a special discount for one of the products you sell. (Don't have product? See #5 and #6.)
4. Update your database(s) of past speaking contacts and then contact them about one of your speaking topics (hopefully, you have something they haven't heard before).
5. Review your vision and strategic plans (you have these, right?) and work on next steps for something that is yet to be done.
6. Spend 15-30 minutes working on a new product (tip sheet, audio CD, video, book, etc.)
7. Review your notes for your next speaking engagement. (Don't have one? Start with #1.)
8. Attend a writers' critique group in your area (don't have anything to share? Start with #6).
9. Watch a top-notch Christian speaker's video on YouTube, GodTube, Vimeo (their web site or an agency/bureau site has them too) — someone with a similar style to you. Take notes of what works, what's funny, what is distracting, what camera angles they use, etc. and then do the same for your speaking videos. How do they align? What might you work on to improve your video quality?
10. Review your marketing/promotion materials. Is your personality and core ministry message clear? How old is your professional head shot? If more than 2 years old, it's time for a new one.

Just like exercising our physical bodies, one day of exercise is a good start but it isn't enough. It takes daily discipline ... even when we don't want to get out there and sweat.

Here's a personal story:

*As I work with my personal fitness trainer, I connect with her every day after I walk. If a couple of days go by and she hasn't heard from me, guess what? I get a text message from her asking what my plan is for my next activity. I have also downloaded a couple of apps for my iPhone to help me track my activities and diet. I'm finding that accountability is a*



*very important factor to the success of me wanting to do what I said I wanted to do ... get my body in shape!*

*I have found that when I finish walking for 30 minutes, just being able to share that small victory with someone who cares makes all the difference. A simple return text message from my trainer saying, "YAY!" encourages me to keep on going.*

Remember, I'm the one who said I wanted to get in shape. Many speakers say they are professional and want more speaking opportunities. Who is responsible and accountable here?

Do you need an accountability partner? If so, find someone in your community, online, via phone or text and report to them. Do you need someone with expertise in the speaking/writing area to not only encourage you but also offer insight and guidance for next steps? Find a conference to attend, or check with a speaker bureau or agency to see if they offer coaching services. Some do on a limited basis (for a fee, of course.)

Being a professional speaker implies two things: (1) There is a profession ... a job with activities that validate the fee charged; and, (2) the person being hired to do the job has a level of expertise and implements certain activities/tasks to stay at that level. What if you were the event planner and after having hired the speaker found out they really did not spend much time on a daily basis doing things one would expect of a professional speaker? Instead, the event planner connects with the speaker on Facebook (it happens) and sees the speaker's daily posts about shopping, playing with friends, eating out at every chance, etc.

If you are wondering how to get more speaking opportunities, please revisit, "What are you feeding?" and "What are you starving?"

My fitness trainer did something that surprised me when I started with her. Rather than having me start out by doing the three workout DVD's she created (and that I have), she asked me to simply walk for 30 minutes three times a week. Sure, I can do that!

Start with an activity you CAN do ... and build.

Take a minute to review the list of 10 ideas above and then do the following:

- Pick one and for the next week do it every day or 3 times a week.
- The second week, add another item to what you are doing, and so on.
- At the end of 10 weeks, you'll be doing all of these activities and you WILL see results in your professional ministry.
- Keep track of where you are today and where you are in 70 calendar days (okay, you can take the weekends off, unless you are out speaking).

Let's feed our ministries, get them in shape, and take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world!

## Are You Relevant?

**Relevant ... appropriate, fitting, suitable, important, meaningful, significant, sensible, and useful.**

Do any of these words closely apply to you, your speaking presentations, your book topics, and to the audience you are trying to reach through your professional ministry?

Many writers and speakers really don't know how relevant they are to their audience or to the needs of their audience because they've never asked their audience what they need. Instead, the speaker or writer delivers content based on their own needs or what they are interested. Sometimes these two intersect. Often, these speakers/ writers and their audience have a connection ... sometimes strong, sometimes weak.

What if we stopped and evaluated the needs of our audience before developing our next presentation or writing that next book ... and give them what they need? Might that be more impactful and life-changing?

Let's take a more in-depth look at being RELEVANT.

**R** = review your bio. Does it include a statement(s) about your passion and purpose? Is that made applicable to how it can touch a reader's or audience member's life?

**E** = evaluate your topics. Who's need is being met?

**L** = listen to the feedback and comments from your audience. How did something you say or write touch their life? Is this reflected in your topic descriptions?

**E** = eliminate anything not related to your passion and your audience's needs.

**V** = verify your findings (before throwing out anything) with your experts, advisors, board members, ministry team, or close trusted friends.

**A** = align your web site, presentation topics and descriptions, marketing materials to match.

**N** = never settle for the same old same old. Update, refresh, and be alert to life to bring in a freshness to your presentations.

**T** = take time to review your topics and materials at least once a year (more often if possible) to stay RELEVANT!

Keep your finger on the pulse of the Christian communication industry. Read newspapers and watch the news. Go to current movies and read books on the best-selling charts. Stay in God's Word as often as possible. Listen to leaders in ministry, social media, marketing, fashion, music, business, and other areas related to your specific area of passion and expertise.

You can take a presentation that you've given many times, add in a statement about a current world or local event that brings a newness and freshness breath of air to it.

The key to being RELEVANT ... is something we all stumble on in our busy lives ... don't bury your head in the sand ... or focus so deeply into YOUR ministry that you forget others and the world around you. Get out and live, explore, and share what God has done TODAY in your life!

## Just Tell What You Know

### Here's a GREAT TIP ... just tell what you know!

The number one area of inconsistency among Christian communicators in their professional ministries is a lack of promotion.

There's a myriad of classes, articles, and downloadable sessions on the subjects of how to create a buzz, how to grow your professional ministry, and how it's not about self-promotion. Still ... very little changes.

### A Real World Example

*I was recently discussing this topic with a speaker/writer after she had told me about her soon-to-be-released book. I asked what she was doing, or planning to do, to spread the word about her ministry and this book. Her response, "I know I should be" [said in a tone as if I'd asked her to carry ten tons up a mountain]. I asked if she had sent out anything to her email list. Again, "no" was her response.*

*Then I had a revelation. I asked her, "do you think you could just tell your email list and your Facebook followers what you just told me?"*

*When we began our conversation, she was excited and rattled off a list of new things she was doing, creating, and involved with over the next few months. If she would just tell those who follow her ministry what she told me ... Viola! She could do some pretty easy, low-hanging fruit type of promotion.*

*"Yes, I think I can do that!" was her response. BINGO!*

Here's the simplest, easiest tip for anyone who is not promoting their message, ministry, books, or other products ... just tell:

- what you are doing,
- where you are going (events, special things, not every day tasks)

- what's coming up (new book, new product, photo shoot, special event)
- when possible SHARE PICTURES of all the above!

If you are doing little or no promotion, do not get hung up and stalled out thinking you need to have a marketing plan before you can start. Do this one simple thing ... just tell what you know!

## Are You Ready for a Promotion?

Have you been speaking and/or writing ... sharing your message ... for years and it seems you just can't make any headway, no matter how much or how hard you push?

Let's stop and look at why this might be happening.

- There is more learning, growing or preparation to do, lessons to learn, or connections to make. It's a maturity or timing issue.
- Its due to heart issues or wrong motives. Check to see if "me, me, me" or "I, I, I" is what you talk or write about most often.
- It could be that God isn't promoting any longer. That's a difficult one to swallow. "But God loves ME! I'm sure He would want ME to have a ministry to share MY story of what He done in ME!" Yikes! Circle back through the first two reasons if you are thinking this, said it, or heard it said.

The sad but true fact is that God quits promoting when we are no longer willing to:

- deal with our issues,
- our motives are wrong,
- let go of something for which the season is over,
- diligently do the work He has called us to do.

God will shut down the process and no matter what you try to do, it just won't happen. His agenda is for us to do one thing ... go out into a lost and dying world and share JESUS with them. Yet there are some who will go but it's all about their agenda, their story. We have all seen speakers and writers who use their platforms for just that purpose. Not pretty.

Donna Partow explores motives in-depth in her training course, [Take Your Message to the World](#):

- We get to share our story and our life experiences ... but that must never be our heart motive.
- If our heart motivation is to be heard, to tell your story, then there is more heart work to be done.
- Our heart-set must be to equip others with resources to succeed.

How does this happen?

How do our heart issues and motives become skewed? “By losing touch with God, be getting into a position where we aren’t connected with His Holy Spirit. It isn’t so much that God says, “no more” as that we lose the way to get more. Sin always separates us from God. If there is enough sin in our lives, we are separated to the point where God’s power can’t flow through us. King Saul is an example of this. Even though God clearly stated through the prophet Samuel that Saul had lost his kingship, Saul continued as king over Israel for many years afterwards. Although his authority originally came from God, he continued in his own authority even after losing God’s.” ([How to Lose the Anointing](#) by Rich Murphy)

Jesus’s example was to only do, say, or go where His Father told him to do, say or go. It wasn’t his agenda. It was never about him. It was always His Father’s agenda and about the world for which He came to serve and give his life as the supreme sacrifice.

### **What does the Bible say about promotion?**

*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another. Psalm 75:6-7, TMB*

If you find yourself pushing, pushing, pushing and nothing is happening it’s time to do some checking, checking, checking.

What have you been pushing that is not working any longer?



## Allow Your Vision to Expand

When our vision is first given to us, we have to allow for its growth, development and clarity. Vision does not change. Where we are in the process of fulfilling that vision changes. If our vision is big enough we can't see it in its entirety in the beginning. When we first begin focusing on our vision, we can see colors and shapes. As we begin to walk it out and get further along we see the fine details and even those are revealed daily.

When it comes to vision for our businesses and ministries ... know what God's vision is for you and yet be very willing with open eyes, ears, and hearts to listen and look for the fine details. If God wants you to paint it purple and you thought it should be blue in the beginning ... be willing to switch colors! It's just paint but it can be the thing that opens up the next part of your vision to a much larger realm than you imagined!

If you don't know what your dream or vision is, I highly recommend, [The Dream Giver](#) by Bruce Wilkinson and [Holy Ambition](#) by Chip Ingram.

What is your vision? Have you seen it expand since you first started doing it? Are you willing to allow for God to lead you in the fine details?

## The Magic Word That Makes It All Look So Easy

Are you tired of watching the leaders — the big boys, if you will — who are always sharing their latest “secret tip” on how to be successful, make it to the top or become a standout? Have you watched their webinars, listened to their teleseminars, attended their live conferences and then later thought, “Sheez, I’m working pretty hard, following the dream, doing what they say and yet I’m not making it. In fact, I’m almost ready to quit believing and give up!” ... sure you have.

Look through this morning’s batch of in-bound emails, of course, there is at least one with the latest 3-step formula for making anyone’s business so much better. While reading today’s email with another new insight from a famous leader, my wise inner voice spoke up with a reminder, “the big boys and girls have something you don’t that makes it look really easy for them ... and it’s spelled ... S T A F F.”

Sure ... if you had a staff of people working on your behalf, you could do a lot more, go farther faster, and make it all look so easy in the process ... just like the big boys.

Chances are ... it’s just you. Right?

So here’s a piece of advice for this week ... one simple step:

***Stop making yourself crazy trying to do everything you see, hear or read that everyone else is doing!***

What if you can’t afford a staff to help at this point? What if running a one man or one woman sweatshop for a little while longer is your reality?

There are a few simple things that you can REALLY do without STAFF:

- Look for ways to automate your process,
- Check into businesses who specialize in having people who can help you,

- and give yourself some grace.

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither will your business/ministry. What things do you do to help make your workload lighter and simplify the process?

## Stay the Course

When trying to figure out next steps, sometimes it's good to go back to the last thing God told you to do and do that before worrying or wondering what the next thing is. Sometimes we ask for a new word or new direction because we don't like our current situation ... and yet, He's already given us instructions on how to get through it. If God wants you to change direction, He is certainly capable of letting you know that for certain through a myriad of ways. Maybe, it's time to start doing what He told you to do the last time you asked.

Here's another thought to add to that ... if God hasn't told you to do something else (or something new), keep doing what you're doing. Until God tells you differently ... stay the course!

Many times, we just need to stop, be still, listen and watch God unfold his plans instead of always wanting to know all the details ahead of time. Just wait and watch ... and be amazed by letting God do what He has promised. In other words, we need to give God an opportunity to reveal His plans ... for a change.

*“And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.” Galatians 6:9*

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6*

*“Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3*

## Some of My Random Thoughts

I have been talking with, listening to, and praying for many speakers and writers this past year ... especially the past few months. It seems they are dealing with similar issues when it comes to marketing, promotion and getting results ... and that's impacting their ability to continue doing what they love and feel called to do on a full-time basis. Several have gotten another job to supplement the dream. Some are very discouraged. Others are on the verge of just throwing in the towel. Ha! ... that's exactly where Satan wants those who communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ ... defeated. Feel or sound familiar? Regardless of how many hours you put in each week ... WAIT. HOLD ON. TRUST GOD!

I have also been listening to some of the "experts" from both the Christian side and the secular side of business. Without naming names, you probably wouldn't know them anyway, these experts are making a living selling their "secret" to success. After a few minutes of listening to any of them, I know their secret: consistent use of basic Marketing 101 principles, talking only about what they do best, working a lot of long hours, and a lot of prayer. Okay, so now I can start selling MY secret! 😊

Last night as I was pondering this, I typed out with one finger on my iPhone notes app the following random thoughts. I hope you will appreciate the effort!

Marketing is a numbers game. Sales training teaches how to build a pipeline and customer relationship management. Speakers and writers are taught about building a platform. It's basic math ... the more people you reach, the higher the percentage of making a sale(s).

Next there's the whole discussion on branding, and let's not forget how to plan a strategy. Hope is not a strategy, neither is passion.

*Sheesh! Yowza!*

Then ... someone goes old school and asks if word-of-mouth marketing is still the best way to spread your message. Ask 5 experts and you'll get 5 opinions and one of them will try to sell you their secret to making a 7-figure income.

So here's the deal ...

1. Seek first the Kingdom of God.
2. Make your plans and commit you ways to God and He will direct your steps.
3. Sow seeds daily and you WILL reap a harvest beyond your wildest dreams.
4. Count the costs.
5. Love extravagantly.
6. Delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.
7. Believe in God's promises for your life and ministry.
8. Pray without ceasing.

Here are some practical things to check out:

1. Help A Report Out (HARO)
2. Use hashtags (#) with keywords on your professional Facebook page (not on your personal page). I started this week and people who saw the posts tripled. Use can use them on Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram too! If you don't understand why, do a little research (it will be good for you).
3. Use Tweetable links in your blog posts (i.e. Click to Tweet)

## About the Author

Karen Power is on a mission to equip and empower Christian Communicators to share their messages and change the world!

While focused on delivering the message, Karen has connected the two-sides of the coin with her businesses. For event and meeting planners, [Christian Speakers Services](#) is a speakers bureau with a ministry heart offering speakers for a variety of faith-based and non-faith based events. For speakers, authors and other communicators, [Empowering Christian Speakers](#) offer professional development opportunities and support services.

With over 40 years of experience in the Christian communication industry, Karen started at age 11 years old as a drummer and later as a bass guitar player for Christian music bands and has been on virtually every side of events and the stage as a musician, song writer, speaker, author, event planner, concert promoter, coach, book tour manager, speaker bureau owner and booking agent.

While Karen has been focused on helping speakers and authors take their messages to the world, she has written several stories that appear in the following books: [Your Spiritual Personality](#) by Marita Littauer, [Making the Blue Plate Special](#) by Florence Littauer, Marita Littauer and Lauren Littauer Briggs, and [The Authentic You](#) by Anita C. Lee. She has also managed virtual book promotion tours for New York Times best-selling authors such as: Francine Rivers and Cecil Murphey and other top authors in the CBA market such as: Carol Kent, Thelma Wells, Kathi Macias and more.

Since 2004, she has focused on working with thousands of Christian communicators and event planners across the country as the founder and owner of Empowering Christian Communicators - specializing in training faith-based communicators, Christian Speakers Services - a speaker bureau with a ministry heart. All of this experience gives Karen a unique perspective to help Christian communicators become emPOWERed and

raise their level of skills and knowledge to achieve their professional ministry goals.

**VISIT [EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com](http://EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com). Get Empowered!**



## **Promotion / Support Services**

You can spend thousands and thousands of dollars and as many hours learning the intricacies of social media marketing and still not get results. You can invest in technology that seems overwhelming at best. You can take your focus off of what you do best to learn and implement the skills needed for social media marketing instead of developing products and delivering your message.

Karen Power has an extensive background in marketing and promoting businesses, ministries, and Christian communicators including billion-dollar credit union, an Dove-Award winning gospel singer, New York Times best-selling authors, international speakers, various events and concerts utilizing print, online, and social media marketing.

### **Promotional Materials**

- Design customized event and concert posters
- Design customized infographics
- Design coordinated logo/headers for web site, blog and social media
- Design coordinated business cards
- ebook - Empowering Your Promotional Materials

### **Website Development**

- Website set up and development (includes SEO)
- Set up connection to social media (FaceBook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Setup or connect with existing email subscription service
- Setup Amazon affiliate program and a-store
- Setup online store and if needed, setup digital product sales and delivery
- Site maintenance on an on-going or as-needed basis

### **Social Media**

- Design heads and other graphics
- Set up Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram page(s)
- Set up, load and/or manage scheduling of posts
- Setup and/or manage scheduling of posts for consistency

- Promotion to various social media platforms

### **Webinar Production & Support**

- Designing template and creating the slides seen during the webinar
- Webinar Producer: behind-the-scenes actually running the technology and the slides during the webinar (allows the speaker to focus on their script and not having to handle the technical aspects of the webinar)
- Create a PDF of the webinar slides to send to attendees
- Create the replay video from the slides and audio (audio created by speaker separately).
- Give the materials to or setup a webpage where the video, PDF of the slides, ebook of the transcript and links to purchase the program

### **Social Media Advertising**

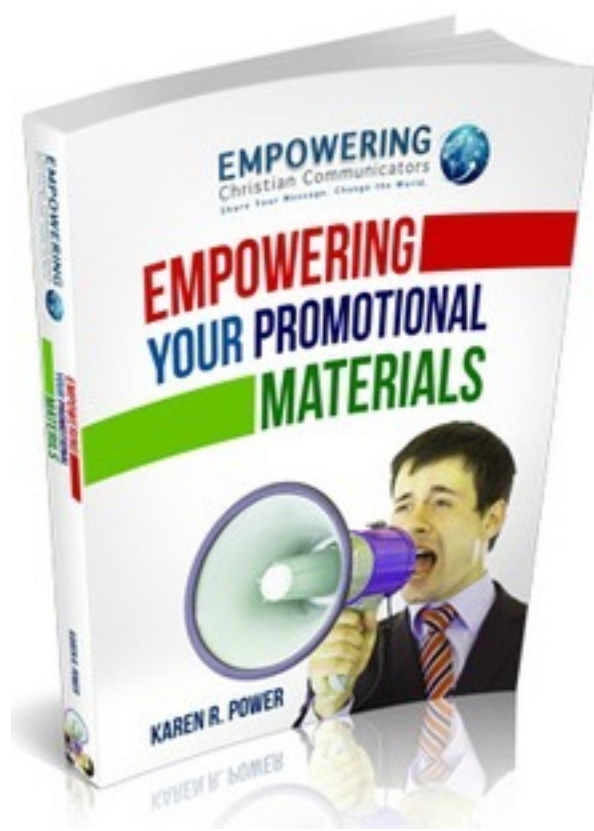
- Design of graphics for Facebook ad campaigns
- Manage Facebook ad campaigns for specific events, products or growth of followers

### **Event Promotion**

- Design customized event and concert posters
- Set up event registration system (can be used for giveaways too).
- Manage event registration system
- Can include: countdown widget for website, registration lists, name badges, online check-in of attendees

***VISIT [EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com](http://EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com)***

## Empowering Your Promotional Materials



***Discover how to make the best first-impression and make the most of your promotional materials to capture the attention of event planners!***

You only get one opportunity to make a first-impression with the committee who is looking for a speaker for their next event. Now is not the time to cut corners. It's the time to hire the professionals to help you put your best face, voice, and promotional materials in front of meeting planners who do the hiring.

If you have ever had to be on the event planner side of hiring a speaker, you know that it's all in the details. Crisp photos that accurately

portray the personality and style of the speaker. Audio or video that captures the attention within a mere few seconds. A promotional sheet that gives enough information about the speaker to make the team want to learn more.

As a speaker booking agent and event planner, I have personally seen materials that made me want to run ... not toward the speaker but away! I've also experienced, and share this story in this e-booklet, when I couldn't recognize the speaker I had to pick up at the world's busiest airport. Imagine my frustration, and almost panic, when the designated meeting spot -- baggage claim -- emptied out for a few minutes and I couldn't recognize her. This could have been easily avoided had the speaker developed better promotional materials ... including a more recent headshot photo. (From her picture, I was looking for a much older lady!) YIKES!)

***Don't let another speaking opportunity pass you by due to your promotional materials being passed over by the search team or meeting planner!***

- **TIPS FOR A GREAT PHOTO SHOOT:** Tips for getting the best quality professional photos for speakers/authors. GREAT TIPS from Cindi Starr, Owner of Shooting Starr Photography and a Christian communication industry professional.
- **SPEAKER PROMOTIONAL SHEET TIPS:** Tips to help you develop a promotional sheet as you capture your personality and presentation style. Tips to help you convey that message and passion to event planners seeking the right person for their events.
- **TIPS FOR DEMO PURPOSES for Audio & Video:** Tips for getting the best video recorded version of your speaking presentation.

**VISIT [EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com](http://EmpoweringChristianCommunicators.com)**