

# Illustrations

## Introduction

*“Let there be light . . . “*

### I. The Purpose of Illustrations

“The sense was dark; twas therefore fit with simile to illustrate it.” - William Cowper
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- A. To explain – making truth clearer to the listener
- B. To apply – demonstrating the relevance of a specific truth, so that others will respond
- C. To prove – to support a truth claim with corroborating evidence.
- D. To correlate – scripture is the best interpreter of scripture
- E. To capsulize – putting truth into bite size portions
- F. To introduce – attracting attention or creating a desire for further information
- G. To pin down – driving home truth like a hammered nail

## II. Holy Scripture – our first recourse for Illustrations.

A. Divine Intent

B. Biblical Inerrancy

“There is no other commentary on the Bible so helpful as the Bible itself.” - R.A. Torrey

## III. Marks of a Good Illustration

A. It should be true – never relate an event from someone else’s experience as your own.  
For that matter, use yourself sparingly.

B. It should be relevant – and not just there to fill space.

C. It should be clear and comprehensible

“A mist in the pulpit means a fog in the pew. “

D. It should be factual – Accurate. Use primary (original) sources whenever possible.  
Fact-check vigorously.

E. It should be credible – beware sensationalism, and everything else that strains belief.

- F. It should be appropriate – avoid anything vulgar, grotesque, and bizarre.
  
- G. It should be sensitive – approach problem areas and sore topics with care.
  
- H. It should be, as much as possible, original. – Strive for novelty.
  
- I. It should not betray a confidence – be extremely cautious about what you parade in public.

#### IV. Source for Illustrations

- A. The Scripture, Old and New Testaments
- B. Personal Experience and Observations
- C. History
- D. Good Literature – the Arts – Quotes
- E. Nature and the Sciences
- F. The Internet, Magazines, TV, etc.
- G. Law and Medicine
- H. Sports (use sparingly)
- I. Biographies
- J. Illustration Books

#### Conclusion:

Don't underestimate the illuminating power of the simplest illustrations.