

Q & A . . .

(DW) Every person who has to speak at all should read Charles Spurgeon's book on preaching, *Lectures to My Students*. It is magnificent, and you don't need to be a preacher to profit from it.

(GG) Read Spurgeon, Dabney, Lloyd-Jones, Robinson—but I most prefer their works of rhetoric rather than just their works about rhetoric.

9. What is the biggest misconception in classical Christian schools about rhetoric?

(GG) That it is merely formal.

(DW) That it is our version of speech class, or a school equivalent of Toastmasters. There is some overlap, obviously, but rightly understood, rhetoric should be the crown of wisdom

for the whole course of study the student has gone through.

10. What is the next step in recovering rhetorical training in classical Christian schools?

(DW) The next step is finding teachers with a biblical worldview who can speak well themselves, and who have a passion to communicate it to others.

(GG) The next step, it seems to me, is in moving moms, dads, pastors, and teachers to integrate the principles of beautiful speaking, reading, and writing beyond the curriculum and into everyday discourse.

11. When the ruins have been repaired, what skills and abilities will a high-school graduate possess?

(GG) Articulate, beautiful, substantial communication will be woven into the fabric of every conversation, in every prayer, in every Facebook post, not just in every discourse.

(DW) He will know *what* he believes, he will know *why* he believes it, and he will be able to present those reasons effectively and winsomely.

Notes:

1. Ronald Reagan, "First Inaugural Address", January 20, 1981. Listen to Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address at www.accsedu.org > School Resources > Journal and Newsletter.



Now, the art of rhetoric being available for the enforcing either of truth or falsehood, who will dare to say that truth in the person of its defenders is to take its stand unarmed against falsehood? For example, that those who are trying to persuade men of what is false are to know how to introduce their subject, so as to put the hearer into a friendly, or attentive, or teachable frame of mind, while the defenders of the truth shall be ignorant of that art? That the former are to tell

Is It Lawful for a Christian Teacher to Use the Art of Rhetoric?

Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo

their falsehoods briefly, clearly, and plausibly, while the latter shall tell the truth in such a way that it is tedious to listen to, hard to understand, and, in fine, not easy to believe it? That the former are to oppose the truth and defend falsehood with sophisticated arguments, while the latter shall be unable either to defend what is true, or to refute what is false? That the former, while inbuing the minds of their hearers with erroneous opinions, are by their power of speech to awe, to melt, to enliven, and to rouse them while the latter shall in defence of the truth be sluggish, and frigid, and somnolent? Who is such a fool as to think this wisdom? Since, then, the faculty of eloquence is available for both sides, and is of

very great service in the enforcing either of wrong or right, why do not good men study to engage it on the side of truth, when bad men use it to obtain the triumph of wicked and worthless causes, and to further injustice and error?

Source:

A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, vol. 2, *St Augustine's City of God and On Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 575, <http://books.google.com/books?id=aQkNAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA575&dq#v=onepage&q&f=false>.