

Learning From the 'Masters'

by A.W. Tozer

To improve your verbal skills, you must learn to imitate the style and artistry of those who use English with elegance and clarity.

Scripture: Proverbs 1:5, Proverbs 18:15, Ecclesiastes 12:12, Colossians 3:16, James 1:19

Topics: "Communication", "Learning from Others"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of learning from literary 'masters' to enhance our speaking and writing skills. He explains that effective communication involves elements like pitch, tempo, and tone, which can be absorbed through attentive listening and reading. Tozer recommends various authors, including John Bunyan and Charles Dickens, whose works exemplify clarity, elegance, and artistry. He encourages readers to engage with these texts to develop their own verbal skills and appreciate the beauty of language. Ultimately, Tozer highlights that reading is a form of listening that enriches our understanding and expression.

Transcript

Good speaking as well as good writing has its pitch, its tempo, its balance and rhythm, its tone and timbre. And these things cannot be learned in the popular sense of the word; they can only be acquired by unconscious imitation. If we listen long and sympathetically to someone who uses English with style and artistry, something of his art will seep through the pores of our minds and improve our own style greatly. And remember that reading is hearing with the mind. We listen to a man when we read his book with a congenial spirit.

Some of my younger readers may want to know who the "masters" are to whom I have referred, and what books I recommend to develop verbal skill. Here are a few: John Bunyan for simplicity; Joseph Addison for clarity and elegance; John Milton for nobility and consistent elevation of thought; Dickens for sprightliness (start with the Christmas Carol); Bacon for conciseness and dignity.

In addition to these I would recommend Robert Louis Stevenson, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Also the poetry of Wordsworth, Bryant, Blake, Keats and Shelley. . . .

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