Digital Ministry Coaching
Lesson: Creating Searchable Content

CONNECT, WEEK #6
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Writing for the Web

You already plan your sermons. Half of the material has already been written... Therefore, don't work harder; work smarter! There's no need for you to double-up your work when everything is already sitting in front of you. The art is taking what you've already written (or already plan on saying) and adding it to your website.

I'm already recording my sermon; what more do you want from me?

Even if you plan on recording your sermons--either into audio or video format--you should still write an excerpt on the what you're talking about and why it's something they need to hear. Something as simple as an intro paragraph counts as new content on your website and will keep your site in Google's sights. Additionally, these little bytes will give members and potential visitors a brief intro on your beliefs and the gospel that will help with whatever they're searching for.

What question are you answering?

- Let's start at the base. What is the main point of your sermon and what questions might people be searching for that your sermon could answer? The main reason to share your sermon online is to spread. Help people find your sermon and the answers they're searching for by ensuring your sermons can be found. Be sure to use most important keywords for your posts' headlines and descriptions.

How does your topic *search*?

- Start typing your sermon's topic into Google and see what the search suggestions are.
  - September 22 - Make Friends

- Apparently Google thinks I'm in Houston... If you're location settings are on (or if you have any contact information listed in your Google/email/social media account), this is a good thing! Creepy though it may be, that means

Google knows where you are and will ensure your information gets shared with people searching in your area.

- Additionally, it's focused on "relationships," "common interests," "rewarding"… As you look through the search results, take note of which keywords are used in multiple posts. Utilizing multiple keywords in your content will boost your search ranking.
- Be sure that your headlines and descriptions are not overly generic. You want to ensure the right people are finding your content for the right reasons.

Keeping up with the Trends

- While many sermons are pre-determined--think holy days or special occasions--it's not the worst idea to keep up with current affairs. [Google Trends](#) is a source of trending topics and although is may be a stretch to connect your John 3:16 to Taylor Swift, doing so will greatly expand your reach and improve your search ability.

Google Analytics

- We mentioned this previously in our lessons, but please use this tool. This isn't just something to show how many people visit your site. Keep an eye on the pages and topics that get the most hits. You could potentially share something that resonates with a lot of people and that helps you with creating future content around similar topics.

Fact: Faithgrowth.com is one of the top search results for "prayers for stillborn babies." While this may not be a subject related to our business, it proves that content (a prayer) we shared is beneficial to the masses and therefore its something we will continue to feature.

Refreshing old posts

- You know the saying, "Oldies, but goodies"? This is a saying for a reason. Many things in life age well. (Again, this is where Google Analytics can help pull your most popular historical posts.) Modifying old content isn't a bad thing and in many cases both your option or that of your congregation has changed since the original post.

Also--back to trends--a previous post may include a relevant topic in today's current affairs. Simple changes such as renaming a post or editing bits and pieces will breathe new life into your previous posts.