

# FITTING WORDS

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*Classical Rhetoric  
for the Christian Student*

**JAMES B. NANCE**



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<i>Resource</i>	<i>Item SKU</i>
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*Fitting Words: Classical Rhetoric for the Christian Student*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: How to Use this Book . . . . .	1
Introduction: The Goal and Purpose of This Book . . . . .	5

### UNIT 1 FOUNDATIONS OF RHETORIC

Lesson 1: A Christian View of Rhetoric . . . . .	9
Lesson 2: The Birth of Rhetoric . . . . .	15
Lesson 3: First Excerpt of <i>Phaedrus</i> . . . . .	21
Lesson 4: Second Excerpt of <i>Phaedrus</i> . . . . .	31

### UNIT 2 INVENTION AND ARRANGEMENT

Lesson 5: The Five Faculties of Oratory; Invention . . . . .	45
Lesson 6: Arrangement: Overview; Introduction. . . . .	51
Lesson 7: Arrangement: Narration and Division . . . . .	59
Lesson 8: Arrangement: Proof and Refutation. . . . .	67
Lesson 9: Arrangement: Conclusion. . . . .	73

## UNIT 3

### **UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS: ETHOS AND PATHOS**

Lesson 10: Ethos and Copiousness . . . . .	85
Lesson 11: Pathos . . . . .	95
Lesson 12: Emotions, Part One. . . . .	103
Lesson 13: Emotions—Part Two . . . . .	113

## UNIT 4

### **FITTING WORDS TO THE TOPIC: SPECIAL LINES OF ARGUMENT**

Lesson 14: Special Lines of Argument; Forensic Oratory . . . . .	125
Lesson 15: Political Oratory . . . . .	139
Lesson 16: Ceremonial Oratory . . . . .	155

## UNIT 5

### **GENERAL LINES OF ARGUMENT**

Lesson 17: Logos: Introduction; Terms and Definitions . . . . .	169
Lesson 18: Statement Types and Their Relationships . . . . .	181
Lesson 19: Statements and Truth . . . . .	189
Lesson 20: Maxims and Their Use . . . . .	201
Lesson 21: Argument by Example . . . . .	209
Lesson 22: Deductive Arguments . . . . .	217
Lesson 23: Refutation of Arguments . . . . .	229
Lesson 24: Informal Fallacies . . . . .	243

## UNIT 6

### **FITTING WORDS TO THE AUDIENCE: STYLE AND ORNAMENT**

Lesson 25: Understanding Your Audience . . . . .	261
Lesson 26: Style. Clarity and Elegance . . . . .	273
Lesson 27: Levels of Style and Figures of Speech . . . . .	285
Lesson 28: Tropes and Allusions . . . . .	297

## UNIT 7

### **MEMORY AND DELIVERY**

Lesson 29: Memory . . . . .	309
Lesson 30: Delivery . . . . .	323
Appendix A: Speeches . . . . .	331
Appendix B: Every Speech in the Bible . . . . .	365
Glossary-Index . . . . .	379
Works Cited . . . . .	389





## PREFACE

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**T**he rise of the classical Christian school movement over the past twenty-five years has led to a renewed interest in the art of rhetoric among Christian educators. While many good college-level rhetoric textbooks from secular publishers are available today, there is a clear need for a complete and robust rhetoric curriculum for high school students written from an explicitly Christian point of view. *Fitting Words: Classical Rhetoric for the Christian Student* was written to meet that need.

## CLASSICAL SOURCES

This rhetoric curriculum gleans practical lessons from the best available ancient sources—the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, and more—examined in the light of biblical truth. Several of the greatest speeches from history and the Bible are presented and used as examples of the concepts taught throughout the course. The text of the historical speeches can be found in Appendix B, and a listing of every biblical speech in Appendix C at the end of this text. Examples are also drawn from other historical speeches, and biblical and literary sources. To help you follow along in the original sources, citations of classical works (i.e., ancient works that have been translated into English and have several modern versions) will be parenthetically inserted in the text in this book, as will scripture citations. All other sources will be cited as endnotes for each lesson.



## KEY CONCEPTS OF RHETORIC

- I. Rhetoric defined
- II. The five faculties of oratory
  - A. Invention
  - B. Arrangement
    - i. Introduction
    - ii. Narration
    - iii. Division
    - iv. Proof
    - v. Refutation
    - vi. Conclusion
  - C. Style
    - i. Figures of speech
    - ii. Figures of thought
  - D. Memory
  - E. Delivery
- III. The modes of persuasion
  - A. Ethos
    - i. Copiousness
  - B. Pathos
    - i. Emotions
  - C. Logos
    - ii. Special lines of argument
      - a. Forensic oratory
      - b. Political oratory
      - c. Ceremonial oratory
    - iii. General lines of argument
      - a. Argument by example
      - b. Enthymeme

A complete list of works cited appears at the end of the book. Also, be aware that as a rhetoric text, this book will occasionally include famous quotations that have passed into common currency. These will be attributed to the generally accepted originator (e.g. “as Benjamin Franklin said”), but without a specific citation in the endnotes.

## FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

The textbook is arranged around the five faculties of rhetoric, the five skills that a student must master to be an effective orator: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Following the pattern of the ancients, much of the text concentrates on the first skill, the invention of arguments, including lessons on specific concepts and methods of formal logic.

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* I.2 states that these faculties can be acquired by three means: theory, imitation, and practice. The theory is contained in the concepts taught in each lesson. The speeches included throughout the text provide clear models for imitation. But the final step to learning rhetoric must be continual practice on the part of the student. Therefore, each lesson includes one or two corresponding exercises in the *Student Workbook* designed to help students apply the concepts. Students will also write and deliver several speeches throughout the course. These speeches should be presented to someone, a teacher or a parent, who is qualified to judge them, following the judging sheets included in the student workbook and the test packet.

The outline at the left shows a complete overview of key concepts in *Fitting Words*. Sections of this outline will be repeated throughout the text to help orient you as you work through the lessons. Think of them “you are here” maps. Other marginalia include definitions of the key concepts and biographical sketches of famous orators and rhetoricians, usually (but not always) referred to in the lessons in which they appear.



## SPEECH ASSIGNMENTS



Since practice in speaking is an integral part of learning rhetoric, this course assigns five speeches to be delivered by the student to a parent, teacher, or other judge. These speeches are assigned after Lessons 13, 14, 15, 16, and 30, and are intended to give the student practice applying the concepts from the lessons. Judging sheets are included in the Student Workbook (for the student to see the criteria by which he or she is judged) and in the Exam Packet for the judge to copy and use.

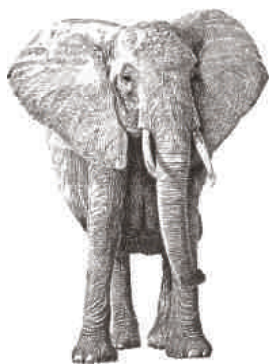
## OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

In addition, every lesson concludes with optional material to help the student develop his or her rhetorical skills. The optional material is easily identified by its corresponding icon.



### Thinking Deeper

Thinking Deeper includes a few questions for more in-depth discussion for a class, or for research by the individual student. The questions relate to the concepts taught in the lesson (some more directly than others), and are intended to go a bit deeper for the sake of interest and discussion.



### Developing Memory

Developing Memory gives the students exercise in improving that skill by suggesting material to memorize, including Bible verses, book or speech excerpts, or other relevant sources. The student may find it helpful before starting this course to read Lesson 29, which presents some methods for memorizing.



### **Reading Further**

Reading Further suggestions are given for the student or teacher who wants to learn more about the topic in the lesson. These are often sections of books referred to by the author to verify his own understanding of the concepts in each lesson. The readings are completely optional; the information in the lessons are sufficient without them. They are included for those who want to do further research.

### **TESTS**

Tests are provided in the exam packet and should be taken after the corresponding lessons are completed and reviewed.

### **VIDEO COURSE**

In the video course that accompanies this text, the author introduces and teaches through each lesson. Each lesson also introduces a figure of speech or thought (retaught together in Lessons 27 and 28), suggestions for the optional Thinking Deeper discussions, and suggestions for completing the exercises. Lessons just prior to tests or speeches will include related helps.

### **COMMONPLACE BOOK**

Students should purchase a blank book for the recording of commonplaces: quotes, excerpts, or sayings gleaned from what they read, hear, or see that can be used to develop their copiousness. Topics for commonplaces are suggested in the video lessons. For more on copiousness and commonplace books, see Lesson 10.

We hope that this curriculum will provide Christian students the tools they need to learn the art of classical rhetoric.



## INTRODUCTION

# THE GOAL AND PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

**T**his text was written with one goal in mind: to help Christian high school students learn to speak with elegance and persuasion. It does so through the three-fold method of theory, imitation, and practice: teaching students the tools of classical rhetoric, demonstrating their use by the greatest orators in the best speeches available, including many biblical speeches, and helping students to skillfully wield those tools themselves, to the end that they can confidently deliver well-prepared speeches in any situation, to the glory of God.

Why should students strive toward this goal? Throughout their schooling, and later in their private and professional lives, they will frequently find themselves in situations where they are expected to speak thoughtfully and skillfully before an audience. Students and teachers, doctors and lawyers, salesmen, engineers, police officers, pilots, pastors, and people in nearly every other vocation need to communicate effectively through speaking. And while everybody uses words, believers, as people of the Word, should be especially deliberate in the study and practice of using words well.

Perhaps most importantly, the skills learned in rhetoric include gathering scattered particulars of knowledge into a coherent whole, organizing them into a useful synthesis, and communicating that knowledge and understanding effectively in order to benefit others. Given this, rhetoric can teach students on a small scale how to approach everything in their daily lives

with wisdom, building upon the reasoning skills learned in the study of formal logic.

This text is not a commentary on the *Ad Herennium* or Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; rather, it teaches the practical art of rhetoric from a Christian perspective with those classic works (and others) as primary sources. So it is not a guide to Aristotle, but allows Aristotle to be a guide to us, as Vergil was a guide to Dante, a pagan thinker leading a Christian pupil through unfamiliar territory. As such, we shall neither receive nor reject all that Aristotle and the other classical rhetoricians offer; rather, in the tradition of the Christian church through the centuries, we shall seek to redeem Aristotle by considering and appropriating many of the truths that he and others through common grace noted and taught, as viewed through the lens of biblical wisdom.

# 1

## FOUNDATIONS OF RHETORIC

### UNIT CONTENTS

Lesson 1: A Christian View of Rhetoric . . . . .	9
Lesson 2: The Birth of Rhetoric . . . . .	15
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Lesson 4: Second Excerpt of <i>Phaedrus</i> . . . . .	31



## LESSON 12

# EMOTIONS, PART ONE

**E**motions, according to Aristotle, are “those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure” (*Rhetoric* 2.1). As we saw in the last lesson, we can more easily generate a particular emotion in our audience when we fully understand that emotion: its definition, situations in which it is felt, and people toward whom it is felt. In this lesson and the next, we will summarize these elements for twelve emotions presented by Aristotle in *Rhetoric*, Book 2. In Chapters 2–5, he defines and discusses three pairs of contrasting emotions—anger and calmness, friendship and enmity, and fear and calmness—which we will cover first. For each emotion, we will also consider portions of speeches in which the speaker aims to produce that emotion in his hearers.

## ANGER

As we read in Lesson 11, anger is “an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification toward what concerns oneself or toward what concerns one’s friends.” Someone slights you when he shows contempt for something or someone you care about, such as insulting your sister, or slandering your church. Thus the craftsmen of Ephesus were enraged in Acts 19:25–28, when Demetrius told them that Paul was turning the people away from the worship of their goddess.



### KEY CONCEPT

The modes of persuasion

Ethos

Pathos

★ Emotions

Logos

★ **Emotions:** “those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure” (*Rhetoric* 2.1)

He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.’ Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’

The slight is conspicuous when it is made before those whose opinions we care about, such as our rivals, those whom we admire or respect, or those whom we wish to admire or respect us.

Anger is felt toward particular people. We tend to get angry at those we expect to treat us well, such as a friend who mocks us, a family member who ignores us when we are in need, or anyone who fails to show us proper respect. King Ahasuerus was angered when Vashti, his wife and subject, refused to appear at his command before his guests (Esther 1:10–12). We may become angry when someone thwarts our desires, as when a fellow actor lies about you to the drama director so he gets the role that you wanted. We feel angry when our opponent’s bad behavior toward us is unjustified. Thus Jesus was angry at the Pharisees who sought to accuse him for healing a man on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1–6).

Anger is a volatile emotion, especially because when we are in its grip we feel justified in taking revenge. Consequently, we must be slow to anger (James 1:19–20) and quick to let it go (Eph. 4:26–27). As Christians we are to forgive our brothers who slight us (Matt. 6:12–15), imitating our heavenly Father. While anger is not always sinful, we should not be characterized by it (Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8).

## **CALMNESS**

Calmness is “a settling down or quieting of anger” (*Rhetoric* II.3). We feel calm when those who angered us have humbled themselves before us and apologized, or when they respond to our

anger with true patience, kindness, or gentleness. “A soft answer turns away wrath” (Prov. 15:1).

We also grow calm when we feel enough time has passed, when vengeance has been taken, or when we are “enjoying freedom from pain, or inoffensive pleasure, or justifiable hope” (*Rhetoric* II.3). Since anger is caused by being slighted, we grow calm when we believe that the presumed slight was unintended or the behavior was justified. Thus the town clerk calmed the crowd at Ephesus in Acts 19:37–40:

For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today’s uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.

Calmness also comes to those who trust in God and turn over all vengeance to Him (Rom. 12:17–21, Ps. 37:7–8).

## FRIENDSHIP

Friendship, or friendly feelings toward someone, is “wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his” (*Rhetoric* II.4). Thus true friendship is selflessly caring for another person. And since friendship is always shared, “a friend is one who feels thus and excites these feeling in return.” Aristotle adds that “your friend is the sort of man who shares your pleasure in what is good and your pain in what is unpleasant.” C. S. Lewis agrees, writing in *The Four Loves* that friendship “is born at that moment when one man says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought that no one but myself...’”<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle’s description of people toward whom we feel friendly is reminiscent of Paul’s description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. He says we feel friendly toward those who are kind to us, who



seek our good over their own, who do not nurse grudges, store up grievances, or speak evil of us, who are ready to fight for us, who are honest with us, and who do not desert us in times of trouble. A familiar biblical example is the friendship between David and Jonathan (see 1 Sam. 20).

Aristotle adds, insightfully, that we also feel friendly toward those who “can stand being made fun of as well as do it prettily themselves.” An amusing example of this in literature is the lighthearted banter between Bertie Wooster and his beloved Aunt Dahlia. Here is one such exchange, from P. G. Wodehouse’s *Code of the Woosters*:

“Hullo, ugly,” she said. “What brings you here?”

“I understood, aged relative, that you wished to confer with me.”

“I didn’t want you to come barging in, interrupting my work. A few words on the telephone would have met the case. But I suppose some instinct told you that this was my busy day.”

“If you were wondering if I could come to lunch, have no anxiety. I shall be delighted, as always. What will Anatole be giving us?”

“He won’t be giving you anything, my gay young tapeworm.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course an interchange like this is more appropriate for those who are confident in their friendship, and as such should rarely be included in a persuasive speech.

Jesus teaches about friendship in John 15:13–17, and in so doing establishes a feeling of friendship in His hearers.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

As we need to be careful with anger, so should we be with friendship. “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Prov. 12:26, cf. James 4:4).

## ENMITY

Enmity is synonymous with hatred, and is the opposite of friendship (cf. Luke 23:12). Enmity, like anger, can be produced by offences against oneself, but it need not be; it may arise simply from disapproval of someone’s character. And whereas anger is always felt against specific persons, hatred may be felt toward whole classes of people. Thus Haman’s hatred, in Esther 3:8–9, is directed not against Mordecai alone but against all Jews, as he tells King Ahasuerus:

There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king’s laws; it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king’s administrators for the royal treasury.

Haman’s speech also demonstrates the fact that enmity wishes for the hated to cease to exist—to be either destroyed or banished (cf. Judg. 11:7). Thus, enmity is identified in Scripture as a primary cause of murder (Num. 35:20–21).

Unlike anger, according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* II.4), enmity is not always accompanied by pain, nor does it fade over time. But like anger, the rightness of the emotion depends on its object. While Christians are not to be characterized by hatred (Gal. 5:19–20), it is right to hate what is evil (Amos 5:15, Heb. 1:9), that is, to hate what God hates (Rev. 2:6). God hates not only evil in the abstract, but evildoers (Ps. 5:5, 11:5). Thus, David, a man after God’s own heart, can rightly say, “Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies” (Ps. 139:21–22).

But knowing how easily enmity can lead to sin, he follows this up in the next two verses with this prayer: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

## FEAR

Aristotle defines fear as “a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future” (*Rhetoric* II.5). Fear is forward looking, felt by those who imagine imminent danger coming near; and the more specifically they imagine it—at a particular time, in a particular form, at the hands of a particular person—the more they feel fear. Consequently, in order to produce fear, we should use enargia, vivid language to create a mental picture of some destructive, painful thing. Consider the enargia of the angel from Revelation 14:9–11:

If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

Once a specific danger has filled the mind, the smallest hint of it can cause fear. During a scary movie, a viewer can be frightened by the slight movement of a curtain or the unsteady breathing of the protagonist in a dark house. In like manner, fear can be produced in a speech by merely hinting at the enmity or anger of someone who has the power to harm you. On January 30, 1939, Adolf Hitler’s speech to the German parliament included this veiled threat:

I have often been a prophet in my life and was generally laughed at. During my struggle for power, the Jews primarily received with laughter my prophecies that I would someday

assume the leadership of the state and thereby of the entire nation and then, among many other things, achieve a solution of the Jewish problem. I suppose that meanwhile the laughter of Jewry in Germany that resounded then is probably already choking in their throats.<sup>3</sup>

Five years prior to Hitler's speech, Winston Churchill warned the English people of the threat of Nazi Germany with some fearful language of his own:

It is but twenty years since these neighbors of ours fought almost the whole world, and almost defeated them. Now they are rearming with the utmost speed, and ready to their hands is the new lamentable weapon of the air, against which our navy is no defense, before which women and children, the weak and frail, the pacifist and the jingo, the warrior and the civilian, the front line trenches and the cottage home, lie in equal and impartial peril.

Here Churchill follows the suggestion of Aristotle: "Consequently, when it is advisable that the audience should be frightened, the orator must make them feel that they really are in danger of something, pointing out that it has happened to others who were stronger than they are, and is happening, or has happened, to people like themselves" (*Rhetoric* II.5).

Christians should live free of fear (1 John 4:18, Heb. 2:15). But the way out of a life of fear is through a proper fear of God: "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!" (Luke 12:4–5). This will carry over to a proper fear of authorities (Rom. 13:5–7).

## CONFIDENCE

Confidence is the opposite of fear. It is "the expectation associated with a mental picture of the nearness of what keeps us safe and the absence or remoteness of what is terrible" (*Rhetoric* II.5). Thus, we are confident when surrounded by strong friends or



## FAMOUS ORATOR

### Winston Churchill (1874–1965)

Churchill was prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and 1951 to 1955. Famous for his opposition to Hitler in WWII, Churchill delivered many speeches and radio broadcasts and is remembered today for his powerful eloquence in speaking and writing.

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."—Speech before Parliament 13 May 1940

when we have skills, training, or experience to deal with a dangerous situation. If we have often succeeded or if we have faced peril and escaped it before, we picture ourselves doing so again. Since we fear those who are angry with us or hate us, we are confident when we believe that we have wronged no one, and are on good terms with all.

An actor will feel confident if he has performed on stage many times and has never forgotten his lines or if he has taken steps to make sure he will remember them in the future. A sports team will feel confident if they have faced the same opponent before and defeated them soundly. A nation will feel confident if it has wealth, resources, and an industrious workforce, if its military is powerful and well-equipped and its allies are strong, and if its enemies are weak or far-removed or they have no enemies. Thus we see Winston Churchill argue in the conclusion of his famous Iron Curtain speech,

If the population of the English-speaking Commonwealth be added to that of the United States, with all that such co-operation implies in the air, on the sea, all over the globe, and in science and in industry, and in moral force, there will be no quivering, precarious balance of power to offer its temptation to ambition or adventure. On the contrary there will be an overwhelming assurance of security.

As Christians, we must remember to put our full trust in God: “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Ps. 118:8–9). Proverbs 3:5–26 tells us further how to find confidence in God (cf. Luke 12:22–34):

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase, so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.... Keep sound wisdom and

discretion, so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes. For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught.

In the next lesson, we will learn about six more emotions described in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

1. When would it be right to produce anger in an audience? When would it be wrong? See Ephesians 4:26-27. Discuss this for the other emotions identified in this lesson.
2. The *Iliad* opens with "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilles." Achilles's anger is his flaw, and it drives much of the story. Find characters in stories who exhibit, properly or improperly, the other emotions from this lesson and the next.
3. How does confidence differ from courage?
4. It is well known that music affects emotions (consider musical scores used in television and film). What different emotions might be associated with fast versus slow tempo? major versus minor chords? loud versus soft volume? complementary versus clashing melodies? regular versus irregular rhythm? How can an understanding of music and emotion help the rhetorician?

### THINKING DEEPER



Memorize and recite "King Alfred's War Song":<sup>4</sup>

When the enemy comes in a'roarin' like a flood,  
Coveting the kingdom and hungering for blood,  
The Lord will raise a standard up and lead His people on,  
The Lord of Hosts will go before, defeating every foe;  
Defeating every foe.

For the Lord is our defense, Jesus defend us,  
For the Lord is our defense, Jesu defend

Some men trust in chariots, some trust in the horse,  
But we will depend upon the name of Christ our Lord,

### DEVELOPING MEMORY



The Lord has made my hands to war and my fingers to fight.  
The Lord lays low our enemies, but he raises us upright;  
He raises us upright.

For the Lord is our defense, Jesus defend us,  
For the Lord is our defense, Jesu defend.

A thousand fall on my left hand, ten thousand to the right,  
But He will defend us from the arrow in the night.  
Protect us from the terrors of the teeth of the devourer,  
Imbue us with your Spirit, Lord, encompass us with power;  
Encompass us with power.

For the Lord is our defense, Jesus defend us,  
For the Lord is our defense, Jesu defend.

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## READING FURTHER

- Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* VI.2.



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## NOTES

- 1 C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960), 78.
- 2 P. G. Wodehouse, *Code of the Woosters* (New York: Random House, 2005), 12.
- 3 Quoted in Mark Dery *I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012), 110.
- 4 Traditional. Attributed to Alfred the Great.