

3 Seconds from Pastor Mark Umfleet, The Back Roads Parish

You have 3 seconds to catch my attention. Then you have only 7-12 seconds to start your best thought. And, if you've succeeded in keeping my attention, you have one minute to complete your best thought, or I am gone.

The experts call it the goldfish effect. Social media has reduced the average human attention span to under 8 seconds; shorter than a goldfish. If you don't believe it, simply check the analytics available with your Facebook videos. Check the figures for 3 second views, and 10 second views, and then one-minute views, and compare that to the total reach of your video. The retention may surprise you.

We are all in an exciting and challenging time of online ministry. Some of you have hit the ground running and are producing great stuff. But for those new and perhaps struggling a bit with it, here are a few tips I have learned over the last couple years.

1. **Up and away:** Selfie videos are difficult to watch. Mount the camera so that it is aiming straight or even slightly down on you, and then pan out. Stretch out your arms, and let your fingertips set the width of your screen. No one, even those who like you, wants to be looking up your nose, or seeing nothing but your head filling the screen.
2. **Turn down the reverb.** The empty room you are speaking and singing in is likely enough to give the effect.
3. **Start talking immediately.** Remember, you have 3 seconds to catch my attention. If you spend that looking back and forth, up and down, to the screen, to your notes, back to the screen...well, I've already started scrolling down the page.
4. **Say your best thing immediately.** Don't acknowledge those who have helped you set it up. Don't acknowledge your inexperience (we will know soon enough). Don't acknowledge how many attempts you've already made. If any of that needs to be said, save it till the end. Again, you have 3 seconds to catch my attention. If you use it to thank others I don't know, or to excuse the quality of you or the video, I've already started scrolling. Say your best thing first, and immediately.
5. **Edit and trim.** If you use a one-minute countdown before you go live, that it great. But before you post the video for on demand viewing, trim the countdown to 3 seconds or less. If I have to wait a minute, I'm scrolling past.
6. **Beginning with worship for the live stream is great, but** you may want to edit and place it at the end of any on demand post. Again...3 seconds!
7. **A full-size band for live worship is awesome.** However, consider a lone leader with a guitar. Save the A team for the celebration when we all get to worship together again in house.
8. **Flip the screen.** I know you all are not left-handed guitar players. If your camera is able to shut off the mirror effect, do it!
9. **If your best 60 seconds is in the middle of the video:** copy and paste it to the beginning with a little fade in /fade out effect. If it's good, I now know what I'm listening for.
10. **If your online experience is only for your quarantined regulars, no worries.** They will watch whatever you post. If you are trying to use this time to reach beyond, then, work on the first 15 seconds of what you post. And if all they see is the first minute: make it a great 60 seconds.
11. **Relax!**

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect ...”