



Gotta Story to Tell

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

We are all breathing, walking, living epistles with a story to tell! And God wants our lives to reflect His work in us. But how should we share our testimony as a part of the gospel message with the sole purpose of drawing others to Christ?

Here are a few pointers:

What Exactly Is Your Story?

Everybody's got a story to tell. But sometimes because we're stuck in the middle of our mess, we forget about the past victories won, past hurdles jumped, and past blessings rained down. Other times we have too many stories of God's goodness towards us and we can't decide what to share. Either way,

- Start with a journal and begin chronicling your journey. Just write and let it flow.
- Re-read your journal entries and look for evidence of answered prayers (healed from illness, financial breakthroughs, children blessed, marriage revived, professional opportunities, etc.) or for evidence of areas in your life that served as a source of pain, conflict, or that seem to be reoccurring habits/mistakes.
- Spend time in prayer asking God to give you peace about the testimony to be shared. Be sure that your chosen story is God ordained for sharing.



How Do I Share My Story?

Personal testimonies shared appropriately are one of the most influential witnessing tools for stirring spiritual interest and pointing others to Christ. Your story can make Jesus real for someone else. Here are some points to consider when preparing your story.

- **What's the point?** Every story should have a point for being told. After having heard your story, people should walk away with one main idea or point. When considering your story, ask yourself “Why is this story important?” “Who might benefit from this story?” “How might it point others to Christ?” Your story should help someone else overcome, get through, resolve, let go or move on from some pain/conflict. Your journey and transformation can serve to bless someone else.
- **Every story should end with Jesus.** Your story really isn't about you. Your story should be about how you met Christ, how He brought you over, how you grew to love, serve, obey or trust Him more, or about How He made the impossible possible. Your story should highlight God's goodness, His power, His love, grace and mercy. Those who hear your story, should feel they've had an encounter with Christ.
- **Keep it short.** Don't lose your listener/reader in the weeds of too many details. Stick to the point. You should be able to communicate your story clearly and succinctly. If speaking, consider 3-5 minutes and in writing, consider 300-500 words or less.
- **Think through your beginning, middle and end.** There should be a logical flow to your story. For example, you may share how your life was before Christ (beginning), how you came to know Christ (middle), and what your life's like now with Jesus (end). Or your might share what it was like when you got the diagnosis (beginning), what it was like going through treatment (middle) and how God healed you now that you're in remission (end).
- **Avoid religious jargon and doctrine.** Sometimes our “religiosity” can be alienating. Meet people where they are. Be personable. Our goal should be the sharing of a personal Savior through the sharing of our personal, authentic experiences with God. Your goal should be to point others to Christ, period.



What If I'm Afraid to Publicly Share My Story?

God wants us to be a witness for Him. He wants us to share our stories, but sometimes we might be hesitant to share. Will I offend? Will my story sound trite? What if my words get all jumbled up and I began to ramble? What if I can't recall the Bible text or story?

DON'T WORRY. Just remember:

- **You are connected to a power that is greater than You!** —Acts 1:8
- **God can and will equip you share. If he can do it for Paul, He can and will do it for you!**
— I Corinthians 2:1-5
- **Don't let fear stand in the way. We are called to be Christ's ambassadors.** — 2 Corinthians 5:20
- **Practice your testimony ahead of time. Be prepared. Read and reread. Share with a friend or mentor and get feedback.** —1 Peter 3:15
- **Don't be ashamed. You aren't the same person you used to be.** —II Timothy 1:8
- **The only qualification needed is your love and commitment to God.** — Psalms 119:6

How Can I Prevent My Light from Dimming Someone Else's?

Have you ever been around someone who was "unbearingly happy", seeming to have no problems, just blessings? Perhaps basking in "their light" served to highlight the darkness in your own life, instead of brightening it. So while God calls us to "be a light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16)", be "the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)", and to "run throughout the town and share our story (Mark 5:19)"; He also cautions us to ensure that our stories serve to season or add flavor and that our lights reflect and point to Jesus and His message of hope and love. In a nutshell, it's all about Him, His message, and His work in our lives and NOT ABOUT US!!!! So how can you share your story as part of the gospel message? Here are a few pointers:

- **Remember, it's not about you.** - I John 5:11
- **Build relationships first.** - Philippians 2:3
- **Wait until invited before sharing.** - Acts 26:1-3
- **Know when to speak and when to listen.** — James 1:19
- **Make sure your testimony is relevant to the situation at hand.** - Daniel 4:2
- **Ensure that sharing is reciprocal. Avoid the "I've got it all together, you can learn from me, I'm right you're wrong" trap.** - Matthew 5:12

Remember, God's got you!

PRAY PREPARE PROCLAIM