

LIGHT UP YOUR WORLD
Stories for *Easier Evangelism* (Part 10)
“Telling Our Story”

INTRO: A few lessons ago I addressed two common intellectual barriers that act as stumbling blocks keeping too many from coming to Christ. Reviewing ... **God** is seen, when bad things happen, either as unloving and not good and/or not powerful enough. **Christians** are seen as hypocrites, which is true – all imperfect, in-process bags of dust. More than ever people today are searching for peace from shame and guilt, joy regardless of circumstances, true and lasting meaning, purpose, and fulfillment – All of which Jesus offers. Sadly, many have not witnessed enough believable Christians to believe that a relationship with Jesus makes such a difference. Again, sadly, few have truly had their deepest needs (mentioned earlier) met in their relationship with Christ (or have been unable to willing to tell their world). This is why our story of life change through Christ is so critical. There is power in “telling our story.”

I. REASONS WE MUST TELL

- A. *Biblically* mandated (Psa. 105:1, 5; 107:2; 145:12; Matt. 10:32-33; 22:1:14; 1 Pet. 3:15)
- B. *Relationally* connects - most people are interested in our stories (esp. if we are interested in theirs) – makes us relatable. Same human needs of forgiveness, meaning, hope, ...
- C. *Apologetically* inarguable - We may not be able to fully explain, answer all their questions, but we do know our life has been and is being changed.

II. ORGANIZING OUR STORY

- A. *BEFORE CHRIST* (B.C.) – What was your life like *before* meeting Christ? Where were you spiritually? What was missing in your life?
- B. *CONVERSION* – *What* happened to cause you to consider Christ? *How* exactly did you come to accept and to choose to follow Him?
- C. *AFTER CHRIST* (A.C.) – How has your choice to receive and follow Christ impacted your life? What has changed and how? Why do you choose to continue to follow Him, esp. in difficult seasons?

III. EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL STORIES

- A. Samaritan woman (Jn. 4) – He helped her see her need – more later (vv. 28-30)
- B. Gadarene demoniac (Mk. 5) – “Go, ... tell how much the Lord...” (vv. 18-20)
- C. Disciples – Andrew told Peter, his brother (Jn. 1:41-42). Philip told Nathaniel (Jn. 1:43-46)

- D. Man born blind (Jn. 9) – couldn’t fully explain why, what, and how he was healed – just WHO did it! (9:25)
- E. Apostle Paul shared his story on several occasions (Phil. 3:3-16; 1 Cor 15:1-6; 1 Tim. 1:12-16; Acts 9, 22, 26). Let’s focus here.
 - 1. Before Christ (9:1-2; 22:3-5; 26:4-11) –
 - 2. Conversion (9:3-19; 22:6-13; 26:12-16)- Why decide? Stephen. How did it happen?
 - 3. After Christ (9:18-22; 22:14-16, 21; 26:16-20; Phil. 3:3-16) –

IV. MY PERSONAL STORY

- A. *Before Christ?* Grew up in a small town in Northwest Tennessee with an older brother who had CP (d. 2009). I was always the favorite. Mom (d. 1985) was RN with addictions. Dad (d. 2003) was military all his career. He was brilliant with photographic memory, but hard, vile – also an addict. I struggled with alcohol, too.
- B. *Conversion (How and Why came to Christ)?* Definitely a *process*. Going to church in small southern town was typical, but not for us. We never went. Invited to VBS when 10 and trust Christ and got baptized – no family support, no growth. At 14 at FCA camp trusted Christ again – no growth. About 8 years later (12/72) home from college received call (Kevin died). I was scared. Met with Linda’s pastor (Mac) and trusted Christ again (no growth). Finished my degree (3/73) and went to work at Dupont and married Linda. She wanted Jim’s church – TRBC ... Labor Day picnic saw Jesus in someone ... Halloween 1973 committed again, but stuck – started to grow! Taught 9th graders SS and EE. House’s class. Months later felt call Oct. 74 – Dec. 76 NOBTS. TRBC (76-80). FBO (80-25).
- C. *After Christ?* How has my life changed? *Forgiveness* has freed me from sin, shame, and guilt (imperfect but forgiven). *Indwelling Spirit* has provided power for living an abundant life – no matter circumstances He gives me peace, joy, and hope. Found *purpose* in my gifts and calling to serve Him and others. My life purpose is ... *Hope* in death and eternity in heaven. Lost two sons.

- V. **TESTIMONY TIPS** – Be honest. Be real. Keep it short and simple (versions). Keep focus on Jesus and life change.

CONC: Our personal story is one of our most powerful tools in sharing Christ because it’s irrefutable. Draft it. Practice it. Refine it. Flexible versions. Share it. It’s what you knew for sure.