

## **“Telling the Story of Your Faith Journey”**

Earlier this year we received questions on 3x5 cards asking, “How do I tell my wife and children that I’ve chosen to follow Christ, and how do I explain to them how to do that themselves?” That’s our assignment for this next hour.

“Remember getting butterflies the first time you made a speech in school? Remember that cheerleader you were too nervous to ask out? How about the first time you flipped on the mic at each of the twenty radio stations you worked for? Or the first sales meeting you ever led?

You’d come down with a bad case of “Sahara Throat.” But you made it, and you will again if you decide to start telling your faith journey story.

## **Checking Out This “Faith Journey” Notion**

Chances are, you’re at one of three places on your Faith Journey:

- (1) You’re curious about trusting Jesus with your past, present and future.
- (2) Or you’ve taken that step but haven’t told anybody.
- (3) Or you’re following Christ and have a sense of what’s coming and the need to be prepared. So you want to help others get ready.

“Faith Journey” = your personal, spiritual path to the point where you decide to rely on yourself or some outside entity to guide you through life.

DISCUSS: If your faith journey is a hike in the mountains, what would be your next step, spiritually speaking, in taking your walk with Jesus a little higher?

### **GOD’S FAITH JOURNEY**

- Man was created to be in *relationship* with God in a perfect world.
- Adam and Eve ignored God, sinned, leaving them lost and without God.
- But God didn’t throw man #1 under the Flintstone bus. No, He *sent His Son* to serve mankind’s death sentence: the only perfect sacrifice for our sins.
- Because Christ took our place, God made peace with all men, a free gift which we may accept by faith or reject (John 3:36; Romans 3:23-24, 5:9-11 & 6:23; 1 John 5:11-13; 2 Corinthians 5:21 (All in NIV)

DISCUSS: Why is the Gospel so difficult for many to understand and accept?

## **“Doctor, Doctor, Give Me The News!”**

In 1643 England’s Parliament assigned some “learned, godly and judicious” men to define man’s proper response to God. Five years later their answer was: “Love God and enjoy Him forever.” You talk about what you enjoy.

The Enemy doesn’t want you to tell your journey to Jesus. But nobody is won to Christ by a silent witness. Matthew 5:14-16 MSG (“Let your light shine.”)

Your Faith Journey is a story; people love stories. When you follow Christ, some of your priorities change. People may ask you to explain this transformation. You’ll want to be ready to reply (1 Peter 3:12-18 NIV).

Norm’s faith journey story

Norm’s red ribbon story

Dave Brown’s story (<http://thegoal.com>) Select “football,” “Dave Brown”

DISCUSS: Has anyone ever asked you to describe your relationship with Jesus? What did you say?

## **“This Is Only A Test. Had It Been An Actual Alert, I Wouldn’t Be Here!”**

Do we really believe that without Christ we’re “LOST?” Jesus likens Himself to a shepherd who left all 99 sheep in his flock to find his one lost sheep. The Bible speaks clearly about a place prepared for Satan and his angels.

Andy Stanley: “Most Americans believe in heaven. (Fewer) believe in hell. ... Their logic flows like this: There’s a good God who lives in a good place reserved for good people. ... All religions provide a legitimate path to God and heaven.... men and women must do certain things, and not do certain things to assure themselves a spot in this good place with a good God.”

But the Bible says we can’t earn God’s forgiveness. The price Jesus paid for our pardon is staggering: Ephesians 1:13-14 MSG; Isaiah 53:1-12 MSG

### **(1) Feel the Flames**

Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31 MSG)

Jude 20-23 NIV (“Snatch others from the fire.”)

### **(2) Forget your Fears**

Romans 1:16-17 MSG (“I’m not ashamed of the Gospel; it’s the power of God to save all who believe.”)

(3) Find a Friend

(4) Focus on Forever (Matthew 6:19-21 "...treasures on earth..." vs heaven

Fishing for men IS our calling (Matthew 4:18-20 MSG).

Acts 1:6-8 MSG ("You will be my witnesses.")

We've been told a lie that our faith is a *private* matter, *not* to be *public*.

Someone took the risk (and aren't we glad!!) of telling you about God's love and what Jesus did for you on the cross.

God desires the salvation of all people (2 Peter 3:8-10 MSG). People, in God's plan, are to be reached through other people (2 Corinthians 5:14-21 NIV).

Describe heaven and hell as retirement destinations like Minot, ND, or Maui.

John 3:17-21 (Jesus came to save, not condemn.) In serving others, our purpose is helping someone to **know** or **grow** in Christ.

That often happens when we tell the story of our faith journey. Pray for opportunities to tell your story (Colossians 4:2-4 MSG).

If you love someone, you tell them the truth. (Not "RIP, bro. We sure had some good times. Love ya.) Reality is Priority. Focus on Forever.

Tell it to your kids. Use an age-appropriate version of the Bible, Steve Green music videos and Campus Crusade's JESUS film, seen by untold millions.

Keith Hesse's surrender to Christ: "I can't pull it off!"

Corporate trainer at Barrier Motors: "The first thing we teach our staff is how to listen to customers." We need to listen to the other person first. Then present God's love and forgiveness as the key to wholeness.

**DISCUSS: Who would you like to tell your faith story to, and what steps will you take to make that happen?**

### **YOUR FAITH JOURNEY**

- What was your life like before Christ?
- How did God open your spiritual eyes?
- What's Jesus doing in your life this week?

**VOLUNTEER:** tells his story to Norm

George's press table story: the Bible speaks for itself. If you're not ready to tell your story, try handing out relevant books that point to Jesus.

God's given us the high honor of demonstrating that "in Christ" is the safest, best place to be. As Jesus lives His life through us, we *become* His witnesses (Ephesians 3:19 NIV). God draws people to Himself by being seen in us.

Christ told His disciples, "You'll be my witnesses." He wasn't giving an order; Jesus was saying that once He moves into your spirit, you automatically become one of His billboards. It's who we are!

God sent Jesus Christ to earth to return all people to a loving relationship with His Father, and He has a plan to continue impacting the world through you. Like Jesus, we're to take the Good News of God's love to others

1. Engage the Lost  
Jesus hung out with "the wrong crowd." This infuriated the super-religious Pharisees.
2. Endear the Lost to earn the right.  
"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28 NIV). Sincere service motivated by the love of Christ can be the bridge from hardness to openness in the lost person's heart.
3. Educate the Lost  
After we've engaged and endeared the lost, we tell them the truth about who Jesus is and how He can make a difference in their lives.
4. Exhort the Lost to Make a Decision about Jesus.  
"Paul said, 'Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' (2 Corinthians 5:11a NIV)."

What God's done for us is too good to muzzle. As we fall deeper in love with Jesus, we'll be ready to tell the story of what He means to us. This will draw people to investigate Christ. We can't make decisions for them, but we can challenge them to decide about Jesus Christ.

## RESOURCES

***THE CASE FOR CHRIST, LEE STROBEL, ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE***

***THE CASE FOR FAITH, LEE STROBEL, ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE***

***THE REST OF THE GOSPEL, DAN STONE & GREG SMITH, ONE PRESS***

***THE REASON FOR GOD, TIMOTHY KELLER, DUTTON***

***IF YOU'RE THERE, GOD, I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK, STEPHEN GAUKROGER, FLEMING H. REVELL CO.***

***HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH, ANDY STANLEY, MULTNOMAH BOOKS***

***KNOWING GOD, J.I. PACKER, INTERVARSITY PRESS***

***THE FREE GIFT, KEN WILLIG, WWW.TFGBOOK.COM***

The Roman Road is a group of Bible verses explaining how to be saved from your sins by Jesus Christ.

**1**

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

**2**

Romans 6:23a "...The wages of sin is death..."

**3**

Romans 6:23b "...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**4**

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us!"

**5**

Romans 10:13 "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

**6**

Romans 10:9,10 "...If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

**7**

John 1:12 "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name!"

His Deal

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