

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

(1 Peter 3:15)

We are indeed the only Bible that some people may ever read. It is important that we be always prepared to share the good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for us, in an instant when called upon to do so.

For many, this presents a real challenge. The thought of actually trying to explain to someone else the "way of salvation" is more than a little intimidating. Let's face it; we might get asked a question to which we don't know the answer. Or, perhaps someone will reject us and tell us they really don't wish to hear anything about the Bible! Worst of all, we might actually be thought of as a fanatic.

Now, it may just be that those issues are really addressing the point that in order to actually share our testimony, we cannot allow the focus to be on us! I know this might sound a bit contradictory but that is actually how it is. If we allow our focus to be on ourselves, we will neither have the power, nor the motivation, to faithfully share the gospel.

I'm reminded of the song titled, "Stop and Let me Tell You What The Lord Has Done For Me." This is what is commonly referred to as sharing our testimony—telling others what God has done for us. Yet, how can you do this without focusing on yourself? The answer is really quite simple—focus on two others instead.

The two others we must focus on are God, of whom, without Him we would have no testimony, and the person to whom we are attempting to share. You see, our testimony is really God's testimony. Without Him, we would have no hope!

The second person we must focus on is the person to whom we wish to share our testimony. That person has a need and it just may be that we can be used of God to help meet that need! We must share our testimony, recognizing first of all that when we do so, it is God we are pleasing and, secondly, it is the person to whom we are talking that might desperately need to hear our story! We should see him or her as needing to be rescued from a fire—an everlasting fire!

I've often asked others, "Who would walk past a house at night and see a fire that had just begun at one end of the house without at least attempting to awaken the inhabitants? Who would just walk on by, thinking something like, "They probably are asleep and don't wish to be disturbed?" How ridiculous!

Yet, we Christians often do something just as bad, if not worse. We know that everyone who has not received the gift of eternal life by trusting in (believing) Jesus is headed for the Lake of Fire, called *Hell* in the Bible. What is so troubling about this is the fact that we are blessed with the opportunity to be God's ambassadors and we often ignore our responsibility. Shame on us!

In asking others the reason why they don't at least try to share the gospel by giving their testimony, I find that most excuses relate to "fear." Either, they are afraid they will be asked a question they cannot answer, or they fear being rejected and thought of as a sort of fanatic. In other words, they fear what others will think of them.

There must be a thousand ways to open a conversation that will allow you to share the gospel but, without a plan, they seldom are recognized. One of the qualities that is necessary to be a faithful witness is to be bold. Boldness causes fear to flee. It has been said that "Courage is not the absence of fear but the conquest of it!" Jesus can give us the strength!

Another phrase I've heard in a song goes like this: "If you are saved and you know it, then your life should surely show it!"

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.
(2 Corinthians 3:2-3)

Yes, we are the only Bible some will ever read. It should be our objective that when others see us, they will see Jesus in us. This, often, is done more clearly as we experience the trials this life brings to us. In fact, it is during these trials that we should not be surprised to see others asking us what it is that gives us such peace.

When sharing your testimony, you must first know your objective. It should, of course, be to give the glory to God, for it is Him alone who deserves it. Your objective should never be to boast in yourself, or to make anyone jealous of how God has blessed you, perhaps seemingly more than He has those you are sharing it with. When possible, you should include scripture to connect your story with His word. When done, your audience should be able to see God's hand at work in your life.

Don't be afraid or hesitant to include God right from the beginning. As you begin, you can explain what a situation was like and then use

the transitional phrase, as we often see in the Bible, “but God,” and go on and tell the difference He has made. Here is an example:

I was very fearful growing up about many things. One thing I was afraid of was that I would not amount to anything and would live my life without purpose. But, fortunately for me, I learned that God loves me, as He does everyone, and that made a world of difference. When I understood that eternal life is a gift and is available for everyone, I knew then that I could have purpose sharing that news with others! I love helping others to understand John 3:16 (I quote it) and Ephesians 2:8,9 (I also quote this). Not only is eternal life something we don't work for; it is something we cannot work for, as then it would not be a gift. I serve Him out of gratitude, not because I am trying to deserve heaven.

Now, that was a short example. As I mentioned earlier, there might be a thousand ways to share your testimony and in the process, give the message of His love and forgiveness to others. You should be able to share it in a minute or two, as in the previous paragraph, or spend a lengthy time if the opportunity is present. If you do not have the scriptures memorized that you will want to use, carry them with you in some form, thereby allowing you to share the fact that it is God's word that makes the difference!

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

(1 John 5:11-13)

I have seen many situations in which professing Christians have talked about God without telling others how they also can know Him. They leave the listener feeling “left out,” wondering why God, if He exists at all, doesn't show Himself to them. We ought to be careful not to do this.

Personally, I use gospel tracts. It was through the reading of a tract that I learned that God loves me and forgives all who believe (trust) Jesus for it. (I love explaining these next verses.)

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

(Acts 13:38-39)

I will hand a tract to someone and say something like, “You may already know this and, if you do, you can pass it along to someone else who doesn't, but I want to encourage you to read it. It contains the best news I've heard in my life! I am so thankful someone shared it with me and I am happy to share it with you.”

I often tell folks that the reason most people never see God is that they are not looking for Him. He is there and He is not silent! If you know this to be true and have received Jesus as your Savior, tell others about Him before it is too late for them. Tell them what God has done for you and assure them that He loves them too!

**(NOTE: All quoted scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
GENE GREESON
Suncoast Community Church
12855 110th Avenue North
Largo, FL 33774 / Ph: 727-595-1739
Email: genegreeson@gmail.com

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Written by Gene Greeson, Largo, FL
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