

HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY

Peter's Story Is Powerful

Peter was a person like us. He loved Jesus but he often stuck his foot in his mouth.

After experiencing grace he was reunited with his Savior and his story of failure and forgiveness was recorded in Scripture for all to read.

God rescued and redeemed Peter because he loved him. But God also rescued and redeemed Peter because *he loves us*. Peter's story has stood for millennia now as a reminder that Jesus forgives our failures.

Your Story Is Powerful Too

In his book *The Gospel In A Pluralist Society* missiologist Lesslie Newbigin explains what he calls the front door principle. He says "God's word does not come to us through the skylight as disembodied truth but through the front door when we welcome a neighbor." What Newbigin means by this, is that God rarely just drops the gospel on someone directly from heaven. He usually brings the gospel to them through a personal friendship with someone else.

It is no accident that you know the people that you know. God has put you intentionally into their lives so that your story, like Peter's story, can be a vehicle of good news.

God loves your neighbor and he wants to send you through their front door. And when you get the chance to share it, your story will be the gospel with skin on.

God wants us to be ready to share our story with our friends. But many of us are not ready.

How to tell your story

In his book, *Just Walk across the Room*, Bill Hybels writes about the importance of sharing our stories.

"Stories are captivating." He writes "Jesus' stories were ordinary "a business owner needed some work done and went out to hire day laborers...," Or "A woman was standing in her kitchen one day, baking homemade loaves of bread..." Prodigal son...eye of a needle, shrewd managers.... All pointing toward God's grander story. Our stories fit into God's greater story also. When people grasp the magnificent truth that the Gospel has direct implications for the meaning of their stories, all sorts of light bulbs flicker to life:

I can be found like the lost son.

I can be cared for by a Good Shepherd too.

My deepest needs—like the widow's—can actually be met.

I can receive abundant life just by exhibiting the tiniest amount of faith.

Telling our story can show others that their story actually makes sense in the context of God's bigger story.

Good stories gone bad....

These are things to avoid:

1. **Being long winded.** Most are way too long. Keep your story brief and allow people to ask questions. Leave them wanting more and trust God to open up a dialogue if you are meant to say anything further about your journey.
2. **Fuzziness.** Half a dozen plot lines, books read, supernatural situations they have experienced and conferences attended, aisles walked, angels in the bedroom, dead relatives in the room... Instead use one clear plot line that appropriately conveys the heartbeat of your faith journey.
3. **Religionese.** Salvation, born-again, accepting Jesus, and personal Lord and Savior mean very little to people who are not Christ-followers. Take the time necessary to de-jargonize your story. You want them to understand every word you say.
4. **Superiority.** Avoid pious haughty statements that shut people down."

Bill Hybel's story

When people ask me why I am so fired up about God, I tell them this, "There was a time in my life when I was absolutely certain that the only way to gain God's favor was to perform, achieve, and strive. But then I met the Son of God in a powerful way and learned that the only way to gain his favor is to accept his gift of grace. Almost immediately, it brought an overwhelming peace to my soul, an end to my useless striving, and a revolutionary change to my entire world."

On the day when Christ met me, the geological plates of my soul permanently shifted; that's where my passion comes from to help men and women on the front side of the cross have a dramatically different story on the back side—that's about all I want.

Your story should consist of 3 elements:

1. **Before Jesus**
How was your life before you met Jesus? Think of some adjectives to describe what your life was like.
2. **Jesus**
What brought you to a relationship with Jesus?
3. **After Jesus**
How has your life changed since you made Jesus the center of your life? In this part, you can also share something that He is still working on in your life.

Take these 3 elements and try to put them together into a brief (approx. 1 minute) story about how you came to Christ. Become very familiar with what you have written down, so that you will feel very comfortable sharing it with those you come in contact with.

Here's what the bible has to say about being prepared to share our story.

1 Peter 3:15-16

“And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way.” (NLT) I also like how The Message bible says it... “Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy.”

VIDEO RESOURCES-

Here is a short video from someone who narrowed their story down to 100 words.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRafn91oJMU>

Here is a graphic video on sharing your story in two minutes.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=W2ZkeCLpNAc>

