



Sharing your story



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WITNESS

Each of us has a story to tell. An account of who we are, the values we hold dear, how we try to be and how we got to be where we are today. This is true whether we are a Christian or not. The things that we do and the things that we say are the outward signs of the person we are – they give the evidence of our life. The Bible uses the term “witness” when referring to this. A witness is simply a person who gives evidence. Some of us may have been to Court to be part of a trial, most of us have seen films and TV programmes set in court rooms and are familiar with the idea of a witness, either for the prosecution or the defence, under cross examination. We are also familiar with the idea that a witness must “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”. The Biblical idea is that the things that we do, and the things that we say, speak of the truth of who we are. So from the point of view of the Bible we are all witnesses, whether we feel comfortable with the idea or not, and as Christians we all witness to the work that Jesus is doing in our lives.

ACTIONS

There is a colloquialism that says “actions speak louder than words”. It is often easy to say the right things but it is often harder to put what we say and believe into actions, but this is part of being who we are in Christ. Knowing Jesus is not just a head knowledge or a heart emotion it is about letting that relationship with Jesus change who we are and have that feed through into what we do. In Matthew 5 vs 14 to 16 Jesus says:

“You are the light of the world. A City on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl, instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”.

James 2 vs 14 to 16 says:

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them ‘go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?”

Knowing Jesus has a practical outworking in the way we live our life in all parts of that life. It changes how we deal with people in the home, at school and at work. It impacts on our priorities, and it affects how we spend our time and resources. As Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, works with us to bring the values of the Kingdom of God into the core of our lives the outworking is seen in the way that we act. Knowing Jesus means having His values and having His values is like an engine that effects how we live our lives, and how we live our lives will be seen by those with whom we have contact.

WORDS

Often it is the changes in the way that a person acts, the things that a person does or does not do, that cause others to notice that something has changed. This, in turn, may cause them to question that change. As much as actions demonstrate who we are at some point we each need to tell others of our faith. If we do not witness with our words then how will others know that it is Jesus that has made a difference to our life? 1 Peter 3 vs 15 says:

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed on their slander.”

2 Corinthians 4 vs 13 says:

“It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak...”

For many this verbalisation of faith can seem daunting – whether in response to questions from others or when taking the initiative in speaking of Jesus. Sometimes we struggle because we are afraid of the reaction we may receive. At other times it is because we think we don't know what to say. We may feel we will let Jesus down, but Jesus has brought us to that point and He will be with us and will guide us in what to say, how to say it and in dealing with the reaction.

SHARING YOUR STORY

When an opportunity arises to share your story it is good to remember three things:

- **Make it personal:** The biggest witness for Jesus is, simply, you. You are a living, walking, breathing before and after person. Your story is your testimony. The classic testimony is:
 - This was what I was like before I became a Christian.
 - This is how I became a Christian.
 - This is what I am like now.

But your story is about the now, about what difference Jesus makes now, so how you became a Christian is just one important part.

- **Know what you believe:** You may be asked many questions about many things. No one can be expected to know everything, so don't be afraid to say that you don't know but will try to find out. It is easy to be discouraged because you may not be able to answer questions there and then in conversation, but we should all be able to speak of the core gospel message.
- **Know how to become a Christian:** You may get to the point where the person you are talking to wants to know how they can become a Christian. There are lots of models for how to help someone become a Christian but these can be formulaic, becoming a Christian is not like filling out an application form to join a club, it is about a recognition that a person needs to be right with God and inviting Jesus to be part of their life and that this recognition is best expressed in a prayer acknowledging this and inviting Jesus to take that part.

HELP

If you would like to talk more about anything in this leaflet please speak to one of the Leaders or a Christian friend. Verbalising our faith is not easy and it helps to talk this through with others, and to share your personal story amongst fellow Christians.