

5. The power of a testimony

Discussion guide – Series II



HOOK:

- Can anyone remember children's stories you heard when you were very young?
- Can anyone remember hearing a Christian testimony years ago, from which you can still remember details today?

BOOK: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - Receiving comfort to give comfort

- As a simple reflection, what things could we learn or be encouraged by from these verses?

Revelation 12: 10-12 – How the saints overcame

- Who was hurled down?
- To where was he hurled?
- According to the text, who triumphed?
- By what two things did they triumph, and what might these mean? *
- From these verses, for how long might the challenges of this life affect the saints? (Do they continue forever?)
- These verses suggest that faith in Jesus, along with the encouragement of testimonies, can give us courage. How much courage, and why would we need it?

LOOK:

- What is it about testimonies that makes them so powerful for encouraging faith?
- From your experience, are non-church people generally interested in hearing spiritual stories? (If some non-believers seem not to be interested in hearing *Christian* stories, what might it be that is putting them off?**)

Comment: Beyond our testimonies, everyday stories about natural life events can also be used to communicate spiritual points. Consider Jesus' parables as an example.

TOOK:

- What did the video suggest as the three key points of a testimony? (1 - Beforehand. 2 - What God did. 3 - How I was changed).
- **Activity 1:** Make a list of your key 2 or 3 faith experiences that you could tell someone else about, to encourage their journey toward faith.
 - From these select an experience you feel a strong emotional connection to in terms of how it impacted your life - because you will naturally communicate that story better.
 - Write the story down in about 300 words, with a non-church audience in mind (300 words will take about 2 minutes to say).
 - Share this with the group.

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- **Activity 2:** The #hopestory / #bestdayofmylife / #easterchangedmylife challenge.
 - Write your story again – but this time in 160 words, or less.
 - Record this very simply with your phone in under 1min.
 - Upload to social media with the above hashtags in the description.
 - Share this with a few friends who you'd hope to encourage to consider faith one day.
 - (At Easter, consider doing the same with #EasterChangedMyLife).
 - Then share this with some church friends – to challenge them to do the same!

Pray:

- ...for suitable occasions to ask people about their stories this week.
- ...for God to help you remember stories of your own which you could share concisely when in conversation, to encourage faith.

* 'Blood of the lamb' alludes to faith in what Jesus did at the cross. 'The word of their testimony' refers to the ongoing encouragement they received through hearing regular current stories about God was doing.

** I wonder if some non-church people who are interested in our spiritual stories stop being interested when they start to feel we're trying to convince them of or convert them to something. In other words, the attitude of our hearts is unavoidably in the tone of our words. When we have an agenda – people can tell. Remembers Series 2, Video #3 - 'How to start a normal conversation'. A point Raki makes in that video is that, "The freedom of the conversation has a lot to do with the dynamics of the conversation". We should desire to encourage people to embrace faith in Christ. However, the way we approach this needs to be sensitive. We talk with people, not at people. We ask questions more than we talk. And when we do talk, we should do so clearly and boldly – yet also with all gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

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Series I – Reaching your world one conversation at a time

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|---|----------|
| 1. If we don't who will? | 5mins |
| 2. This is the gospel (How to share the gospel in 30sec) | 5mins |
| 3. How to start a conversation | 4.30mins |
| 4. How to share the gospel (How to share the gospel in 2mins) | 4.30mins |
| 5. The power of prayer | 5mins |

Series II – It's all about the conversation

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|---|-------|
| 1. Why Christianity is good news - not bad | 5mins |
| 2. Conversations move at the speed of trust | 5mins |
| 3. How to start a NORMAL conversation | 5mins |
| 4. How to disagree without disagreeing | 5mins |
| 5. The power of a testimony | 5mins |

Series III – Conversation in a hostile environment

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|---|-------|
| 1. How to be effective in a hostile environment | 5mins |
| 2. Answering questions with questions | 5mins |
| 3. Avoiding the quotable quote | 5mins |
| 4. When it's right to confuse people | 5mins |
| 5. How to say nothing (unless you really say something) | 5mins |