

## Share His Story and Include Your Story

### Sharing Your Story

- We have many biblical examples of individuals witnessing to others how Christ had impacted them.
  - The Samaritan Woman: “So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’ They went out of the town and were coming to him.” - John 4:28-30
  - The man who was born blind and was healed by Jesus (John 9)
  - The Apostle Paul (Acts 22 & 26)
- However, we must be careful that our personal experiences don’t become the focus.
  - “I once heard someone recommend a method of evangelism that relied solely on the personal testimony. ‘No one can argue with your testimony!’ he said. Exactly. That’s why it’s insufficient.” - Trevin Wax
  - “I was even told by older Christians, ‘People might reject your arguments, but they can never deny your testimony.’ Remarkably, however, they did deny my testimony—quite regularly. They dismissed it with the imbibed mantra, ‘What is true for you is not true for me.’ - Randy Newman
- Gospel presentations that include personal testimonies should take care to emphasize the gospel itself (the news of Christ’s death and resurrection), not merely our personal experiences of life transformation. A change of heart is a further demonstration of the gospel and should be used in personal evangelism, as long as the focus remains on Christ’s objective work on the cross.

### Share His Story

- Three Elements of Genuine Christian Witness (Trevin Wax)
  - The events at the heart of the gospel are at the heart of their proclamation. The sermons in Acts reveal how the apostles walked their hearers through the story of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.
  - They are witnesses to the character of Jesus in the way they pattern their ministry after his miracles and show his compassion to those in need.
  - They are witnesses to their own Christian experience.

## Follow Paul's Example

- In Paul's two accounts of his conversion (Acts 22 & 26) he gives us an example of how to share the gospel and include our story.
- Many have summarized Paul's approach into a three-step pattern:
  - Share what your life was like before Christ (Acts 22:3-5)
  - Share how you came to trust in Christ (Acts 22:6-16)
  - Share how your life has been changed by Christ (Acts 22:17-21)
- Randy Newman found four ingredients in Paul's testimony from Acts 26:
  - **Pre-evangelistic plausibility** - Toward the beginning, he asked, "Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead" (v. 8)? He wanted them to see that his line of argument fit with beliefs they already held.
  - **Selective details about his experience** - Paul told about his upbringing (v. 4-5), his recent opposition to the gospel (v. 9-11), his Damascus road drama (v. 12-18), and some (but not many) details of what happened after his conversion (v. 20-21).
  - **Doctrinal statements of gospel components** - Paul wove into his narrative the fact that his message calls people "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (17), provides "forgiveness of sins" (18), leads to "a place among those who are sanctified" (18), requires "faith in" Jesus (18), includes the need for "repentance" (20), and must be validated by "deeds" (20).
  - **Apologetic arguments** - Paul attempted to persuade (not merely inform) Agrippa and "all who were listening" (29) that his message was "nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen" (22). His message implied, "You should believe this because it's reasonable," not, "You should appreciate this and celebrate diversity because it's my experience and knowing of a lot of different perspectives will make you a well-rounded person."