

Who's Your One?

Faith Stories

January 27, 2019 a.m.

HDBC

I was one of five kids. The middle child. Two older brothers and two younger sisters. My mom and dad valued family. We spent a lot of time doing things together. Dinner at the table, vacations, etc. They valued education. Making sure we were not only in school, but did our homework. They also placed a high value on their relationships with God. They knew it was their responsibility to teach us that we were created by God, loved by God and desired by God.

They also placed a priority on being involved with other Christians in church. Though we moved from city to city several times during my childhood, we were always involved in church. I grew up knowing about God. As a young boy, I had no trouble believing in a creator-God who knew me and loved me.

Things began to change when I was about 12 years old. Parents were the same, brothers/sisters were the same, everything around me was the same. But something began to change in me. I knew I believed in God and loved Him, but I began seeing myself as a sinner in need of forgiveness.

I had not done any of the really big sins. I did shoplift one time when I was about five or six. But mom caught me and made me apologize. That was the end of my crime spree. Even though I had not done things that were considered **really bad** I just knew that I was not right with God.

I knew that Jesus was God's son and that he died for me. In his death he paid the penalty for my sins. He did this because he loved me with a love that goes beyond any kind of human love that I could comprehend. I also learned that he offers to each person the gift of forgiveness, that would lead to eternal life in heaven and to a right relationship with God. I knew what the Bible said . . . ***whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.***

So, one day, when no one else was around, I walked outside, looked up toward the sky and talked with God. I asked Him to come into my life and forgive me of all my sins. I put my faith in Him as my savior and my Lord. As much as a 12 year old could do, I gave Him my life and received Him as my Lord.

At that moment, he forgave my sins, entered into my life and gave me the assurance that I will live in heaven when this life is over. I can't explain how it happens, but I know that it does, because I know that it happened to me.

It changed my life. No longer did I simply know about God, I began to know Him personally. From that moment to this day, I know that my sins have been forgiven and that I am in a relationship with Him that he will never break. He has given my life purpose, meaning and significance. I know there is more to life than what I can see and feel and touch. Life is more than just being happy or trying to succeed . I want to live my life in a way that pleases him.

I can't say that becoming a Christian that day made my life easier. I still have problems, struggles and challenges. But it is the best things that has ever happened to me. I want you to know that you can have the same experience. You, too, can have a personal relationship with God by trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

That's my faith story! Everyone has one. The story of what you believe . . . about the universe, about the meaning of life, where you came from, where you are going, God. It has been shaped by your parents, your culture, your experiences. Many people struggle with this part of their life story. So many options, so many questions. They want to know what to believe. Some of you are there. If you were asked about your faith story you would say ***I don't know . . . I don't really have one . . . I'm still working through that.***

I want you to know, that's ok. We hope you will eventually come to see that God really does love you and desires to have a relationship with you. We really believe that! We will never force that onto you, but we hope you will come to the point where your own faith story will include faith in Christ.

Today, I want to talk with Christians about the importance of sharing your faith story with others. It is compelling, powerful and useful. It is an important tool that you have in seeking to tell people about Jesus.

First, some illustrations in N.T, then I will answer two important questions.

1. **Illustrations** (I'll share 4)

Andrew was one of the first men who answered the call to discipleship. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He heard John point people to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Andrew believed in Jesus and followed him. Note the first thing he did. *He found first his own brother, Simon and said to him, "we have found the Messiah." He brought him to Jesus.* (John 1) **Andrew used** his own story (his experience with Jesus) to help lead his brother to Jesus.

A day later Jesus called **Philip** to join his band of disciples. First thing Philip did was to find his friend Nathaniel . . . *and said to him, "we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.* (John 1:45). Nathaniel responded sarcastically, *can anything good come from Nazareth?* Philip's response. ***Come and see!***

Philip used his faith story, the fact that he had met Jesus and chosen to follow Jesus as a way to sharing Jesus with his friend, Nathaniel.

Demon-possessed man (Luke 8:39) Wanted to follow Jesus. Jesus told him to go home and tell people what God had done for him. He did just that.

So, he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

Samaritan woman at the well. John 4. After a lengthy conversation with Jesus, she came to see that he was the Messiah and trusted in Him. She went into her town and told as many people as she could about Jesus. Because of her testimony, her faith story, many people in the town not only came to see Jesus, but came to trust in Him.

Don't underestimate God's ability to use your faith story to draw people to Christ. Remember it is really the story of what God has done for you. So, it is really His story.

2. What to Say

Though your story is unique to you, there are some common things that are helpful to consider when sharing your story.

General things to remember

Keep it simple. Avoid words that unchurched people may not know.

Keep it short. People will get bored if your story is too long.

Keep it truthful. Don't feel a need to embellish to make it dramatic.

Things to include

What your life was like before you became a Christian.

How you became a Christian. Circumstances that led you to that decision.

What your life has been like since you became a Christian.

In the second part, share the basics of the gospel.

People's sin. Roman 3:23. All have sinned and deserve judgment.

Jesus's death and resurrection. Roman 5:8. Jesus paid for our sin.

Personal faith. Romans 10:13. I needed to make a personal decision.

3. How to Start (4 ways to open the door to tell your story)

1) Apology

Offer an apology for never sharing the most important thing in your life.

2) Most Important Thing

May I share with you the most important thing in my life?

3) Tell me your story.

Let them share their story, then you will have audience to share yours.

4) What happens when we die?

Listen to the words of John, the apostle found in 1 John 1:1-4 (Living Bible)

1 Christ was alive when the world began, yet I myself have seen him with my own eyes and listened to him speak. I have touched him with my own hands. **2** This one who is life from God has been shown to us, and we guarantee that we have seen him; I am speaking of Christ, who is eternal Life. He was with the Father and then was shown to us. **3** We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may share the fellowship and the joys we have with the Father and with Jesus Christ his son

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