

HARVEST Lesson 2: Writing Your Testimony



Q: Have you ever shared your testimony before? How would you describe that experience? Some people talk about God every day but perhaps have never really shared their faith with anyone. Some people find it uncomfortable to talk about their faith, especially with people who know their history. It's okay to have some fear. Let's take some baby steps and ask God to give us courage to bless the people He cares about. Consider **Mark 5:19-20**. Jesus told the man to go and tell people about what God had done for him.

Q: How important is it for us to be able to share our faith? Why does it matter so much? Can't God find a different way to communicate truth? Read **1 Peter 3:15-16**. We don't have to share our entire life experience with everyone we know or meet, but it is important to be prepared and to look for opportunities to encourage people in their journey to salvation in Christ. God could share the message through someone else or in some other way, but He chooses to use people like you and me to carry out His will. It is a privilege to be joining God in the work that He is doing in the lives of people all over the world! It a matter of eternal life or death for others that we choose to be faithful in the work given to us.

Q: What is the one thing about you that people find the most interesting? How is your life unique from everyone else's? How does this relate to your faith journey? Could it be a part of your testimony? People are interesting. YOUR story is interesting! Most people have an amazing story to share. If nothing else, the fact that God has reached into your life with His love is an amazing reality worth telling other people about. When we talk about God, we should be excited, grateful, and we ought to communicate what He has done with enthusiasm! Look at **Hebrews 13:15-16** and discuss.

Q: Being completely honest, do you feel like it's someone else's job to share the Good News (the pastor's, missionaries, people with a gift for evangelism, Christians who are more mature, etc.) Why don't we (sometimes) see this as a responsibility that pertains to us? We may know that this is important and we are all for supporting the cause, but when it comes down to it, many of us are apprehensive to be a part of the harvest. It's scary; it may be inconvenient; God may ask us to reach out to those who "don't deserve it". The awkwardness and fear can lead to us making excuses that keep us from being faithful to carry out God's work. Read **Hebrews 3:13-14**. We should encourage one another daily to remain strong and steadfast; if we do not, we may fall into unbelief.

Q: "Trust can be lost in a moment." What kinds of words or actions would cause someone to lose trust in a relationship? Maintaining trust requires a certain level of emotional maturity. We need to be aware of how our words affect other people. Sarcasm, inconsiderate comments, crude behavior can all affect how we relate to people around us. Sometimes we may push the wrong "button" without being fully aware how big of an impact it may have, causing deep hurt that was never intended. We need to think before we act and only say or do things to build others up. Consider the exhortation of **Ephesians 4:29**.

Q: What are some terms that we use in church that might be unfamiliar to people who haven't spent much time at church? Was there a time that you felt Christians spoke a different language? Why does this happen? If you've been in the church long enough, you may not even realize that you speak fluent "Christianese". Phrases like "Are you saved?", "Have you been born again?", an "Are you a believer?", will be unfamiliar to those who have never stepped foot in the church except for weddings and funerals. Bought with the blood, sanctified by Jesus, and justified by the cross require some context for understanding. Try to put yourself in their shoes and use terms that will make sense to the person you are speaking to. It's just one more way to eliminate obstacles to your conversation. Remember **1 Corinthians 9:22**? Like Paul, we meet people where they are at.

Q: How do we build a rapport or relationship with someone who doesn't have a strong knowledge of God? How can we pique their curiosity about spiritual realities? What does it look like? It can be as simple as saying, "Thank you for your help, you have been a blessing to me." Or, "What a gorgeous day! God is so good." Sometimes it's not about what we say that opens a door, but what we do. "Do you need help with that?" Or, "Here is a gift for you and your family to enjoy. I felt that God wanted me to give this to you." Another idea might be to pray for someone on the spot. "That's a heavy burden! I'm sorry that you are going through a difficult time. Could I pray for you right now?" **Proverbs 25:11** says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." (ESV)

Q: What are the ideal circumstances for a spiritual conversation? Is there a way that we can set ourselves up to foster this kind of environment or is it completely in God's hands? Read **Colossians 4:2-6**. Ideally, a conversation will be undistracted, one-on-one, and not hurried. In reality, none of those may be working in your favor, and God can still use a distracted, hurried comment made in the midst of someone's busy day. Even so, there are some things that we can do to encourage opportunities for a good, spiritual conversation. Schedule coffee with a friend. Invite them over for dinner. Visit them in the hospital. Bring them groceries, cookies, or a gift. Be creative. Even busy lives have room enough for people who show that they care.

Q: What would you say are the most important elements to communicate when sharing your faith with someone else? See the list on page 56 of the workbook. God loves you (He doesn't hate you), I am a sinner (I deserve God's judgment), I need Jesus (He is our only hope for avoiding judgment), I choose to receive His gift (it needs to be received). If you should be blessed with the opportunity to share God's plan for salvation with someone, it will be helpful for you to know some verses to help them understand what the Bible says. The "**Romans Road**" is a good resource of verses to keep in mind: **Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 8:1-2, and 10:9-10**.

Q: What are "safe" topics that get people excited about a conversation? What are some taboo topics that we should avoid that can shut down a conversation? Good topics: Family, vacations, sports, weather, nature, exciting adventures/experiences, etc. Topics that may be tricky: Political parties, wearing masks, immunizations, the president's decisions, abortion, alternative lifestyles, etc. We could add to these lists. God can use any topic as a bridge to conversation, but we may need to handle some topics with special care. It really depends upon the person or people that we are talking to. We need to get a feel if people may be easily offended or open to talking about the topics that come up. If you have an ongoing relationship, it's better to play it safe if you think there may be a

chance of offending someone. Keep the door open, even if you have to agree to disagree. Who knows what plans God has in store for them? Refer to **Romans 12:1-18**.

Class Assignment: Share your testimony with at least three people. Does everyone have three people on their list? What will be your next step? Make one attempt at contact this next week. An email, phone call, invitation to coffee, Facebook message... See how they are doing, be sure to pray for them, and open the door to a conversation!

Memory Verse:

Luke 10:2 - *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

PRAYER REQUESTS: