



# FOUNDATIONS SHARE YOUR STORY

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21, ESV

## BEFORE YOU WRITE

**Pray** – ask God to lead this process. Open to the work of the Spirit as you develop your outline.

**Clarify your primary purpose** – what is the one thing you want people to hear or take away from your story? Is there a key theme, critical concept, or big idea you want them to have when you are done?

## WRITE THAT PURPOSE IN 10 WORDS OR LESS

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## A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Exalt Christ, not your sin, or even your self-improvement
- Share struggles appropriately (not in lengthy or graphic detail)
- Identify a specific scripture God used as part of your story (a life verse or anchor text)

Focus on transformation and the work of the gospel versus sharing your entire life story. Though every detail of your story is significant, not every detail is purposeful and moves your story along.

What it <b>IS</b>	What it <b>IS NOT</b>
Your story of transformation due to the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Embracing the Gospel - at a point in time).	A chronological life story.
Your story of continued transformation (Embracing the Gospel - over time).	A running narrative of life experiences.
Who were you before you embraced the gospel?	A detailed account of the exact nature of your sin.
How did you come to embrace the gospel?	A recalling of your self-improvement.
Who are you now that you have embraced the gospel?	A recollection of how a person, a friend, a spouse, or even a church caused you to be changed.
What is God teaching you now?	

## A WELL-DIVIDED STORY WILL LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

The Four Primary Movements



Though it may be easier and more familiar to focus on life before Christ, the goal is to help people hear of the hope found through Christ.

If it would be helpful, feel free to prepare a short outline.

This is not helpful for everyone but can be useful as you start. It can begin to narrow the information down. You can list the four movements and start there:

- Who I was before Jesus
- How I came to Know Jesus
- Who I am now "In Christ"
- What is He teaching me now

The goal is to be able to share your story in 3 minutes. That is short. However, it will help you hone your story. We want you to create a basic version of your story that you can modify, extend, and expand whenever needed. If you can articulate your story in 3 minutes, you will have no problem in 10. However, if you cannot say it in 3 minutes, 30 minutes won't help you.

Here is a rubric to help you build out your story.

Intro (approximately 15 words):

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and this is how God \_\_\_\_\_ (restored my life, saved me from me, showed up, pulled me from the ashes, opened my heart to Him, etc).

Be creative, brief, and honest.

**Before Christ** (approximately 200 words)

- In what ways was your life not working?
- What are some of the circumstances that others could relate to?
- If you had a relationship with God, what was it like?
- If you did not have a relationship with God, what was your view of God?
- What was your attitude toward life and others?
- At what point did you come to know that something was missing?
- What was your turning point?

### How I came to know Christ (approximately 200 words)

You can use the language of "Then God." I was doing such and such, then God\_\_\_\_\_.

- How did God get your attention?
- Describe the start of that process. How did that feel?
- Describe how God showed you that your life was out of control and you needed Jesus?
- What did God do during the transformation process? What did you experience?
- Give specifics on how God used His Word, Spirit, and people to change you?

### Who are you now that you are "In Christ?"

(approximately 100 words)

- How are you experiencing new life?
- How do you feel now that you have trusted Christ?
- What has changed now that you are "In Christ?"

### What is He teaching you? (approximately 100 words)

- How has your life changed?
- What is different?
- How is God using the difficulties from your past to share hope for others?
- What changes has God made in your relationship with others (spouse, family, friends, co-workers, etc.)?
- How are you handling conflict?
- What areas of the old life are drifting away?
- Where do you see fruit in your life?
- What is He restoring?
- How has your perspective changed?
- How have your motives changed?

## FINAL CHECKLIST

- Was Christ exalted? Is the story more about you, a church, a specific ministry or Him?
- Will the listener remember your sin or God?
- Did you use scripture? Is it used in context? Have you checked with someone else to make sure?
- Was sin exalted or described too graphically? Is any sin or struggle described in a way that could lead others to be tempted or stumble?
- Did you use any Christianese language (quiet time, fellowship, walk with God) that might be confusing for someone who is unchurched? Is there a more widely accepted way to rephrase what was said?
- Did you inappropriately communicate that your sin is unique instead of a common struggle? (1 Cor. 10:13)
- Did you demonstrate a victim mentality anywhere? Did you own your part?
- Did you focus on anyone else's sin to an inappropriate level?
- Did you disparage anyone or deflect responsibility toward someone else?
- Did you share your salvation experience (when you Embraced the Gospel at a point in time)?
- Was the language consistent with scripture (grace, through faith, in Christ – alone)?
- Could the way that you communicated your story offend anyone (homosexuals, addicts, divorcees, members of specific denominations, someone mentioned in your testimony, etc.)? We don't want anything to bring attention away from the work of the cross.
- Was marriage/separation/divorce/remarriage mentioned? Was it biblically addressed?
- Could anything said be misinterpreted by the listener to justify sin?
- Is there any mention of demons, baptism of the Holy Spirit, audibly hearing God's voice, or anything else that needs to be checked theologically? It's easy to say something that can be confusing or misunderstood.
- Did you mention any books or authors specifically? The scripture is inspired by God and the only book that should be referenced in your story.
- Is there any unfinished business that needs to be handled before you share this? Anyone to whom you still owe amends? How would you feel if that person was in the audience when you shared? Or how might they feel if they heard it online?
- Was your story equally divided using the estimated word counts?
- Did you communicate your primary purpose/takeaway? Did you summarize it and include it in your closing?
- Has someone else read it or heard you read it? Read it out loud and have someone time you to ensure delivery is under 3 minutes. Remember, this is your prime story. You will add and modify once you have solidified a gospel-centered 3-minute story.

## QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

Think about your sphere of influence (family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers). Pray about those in your sphere of influence who have never "Embraced the Gospel." Make a list of these individuals:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Take a moment and pray for an opportunity to share your story with someone on the list.

*"At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak."*

COLOSSIANS 4:3-4, ESV

God is faithful. He will bring opportunities your way.

Take a moment and pray for the courage to be faithful.

You don't have to preach a sermon or be an expert in anything other than what Jesus has done, and is doing, in your life.

For some of you, it may be difficult to come up with a list. One of the hazards of following Jesus is an insulated life. Christians spend time with Christians and lose touch with those who need the gospel.

If you had a hard time coming up with names for your list, take a moment and pray for God to bring people into your life who need the hope of Christ.

### SHARING YOUR STORY

3 MINUTE VERSION

**Intro** (15 words):

**Who I was before Jesus** (200 words):

**How I came to Know Jesus** (200 words):

**Who I am now "In Christ"** (100 words):

**What is He teaching me now** (100 words):