

**I. THE POWER OF WORDS**

A. Words have the power to influence us toward death or life.

***Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.***

1. Words have the power to bring life, joy, and wisdom into our lives. Our words should reveal wisdom (Col. 4:6), be temperate and controlled (Prov. 10:19-21; Psa. 141:3), and to strengthen us and others (1 Sam. 30:6).

B. Words have the power to bring death and defilement. Through words, we judge others out of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15). Words can break our hearts, make our blood boil, and keep us up at nights. Once you put words out there, you can't take them back (both positive and negative).

C. Today's topic: There is power in your story, in your experience of God. God can use your testimony to encourage, convict of sin, and bless others.

**II. THE POWER OF YOUR STORY**

A. Your story makes you a witness. Witnesses share their testimony.

1. Your life is a presentation of the Gospel. Your life is a witness. A witness is primarily someone you are, not something that you do. Be a witness. How? Live your life as a follower of Christ and give your testimony.

***Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.***

2. One of the ways that the word of our testimony is expressed: Overcoming power is released whenever you testify of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done.

B. The majority of Christians came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ through the testimony of a friend or relative. Not through big crusades or famous preachers.

C. Paul's conversion is described 3 times in the book of Acts.

1. Acts 9 is where the incident is recorded.

2. Acts 22 (Paul tells his story to a mob in Jerusalem). They don't let him finish his story.

3. Acts 26 (Paul tells his story to King Agrippa and the court).

a. 26:1-11 His life before Christ.

- b. 26:12-18 How he came to surrender his life to Christ.
  - c. 26:19-23 His life-change since his conversion.
4. Being a witness is not primarily preaching a sermon, leading a Bible study, or passing out religious tracts (nothing is wrong with any of that). It's the simplicity of sharing a true story. People have been telling stories for generations.

### III. SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

A. **BEFORE** I received Christ:

- *My attitudes, needs, and problems before I received Christ...*
- *My life revolved around, and I gained happiness and security from...*
- *How did this disappoint me?*

B. **HOW** I received Christ:

- *When and how did I first hear about Christ?*
- *Introduce Jesus, who He is and what He has done (1 Cor. 15:1-5; Rom 2:23; 6:23)*
- *What were my struggles in surrendering my life to Christ?*

C. **SINCE** I Received Christ:

- *How has your life in Christ made a difference?*
- *How has His forgiveness impacted you?*
- *How have your thoughts, attitudes, and emotions changed?*

*Adapted from: [www.5clicks.com](http://www.5clicks.com),  
[Christianity.about.com/od/testimonies/a/howtotestimony.htm](http://Christianity.about.com/od/testimonies/a/howtotestimony.htm)*

### IV. THINGS TO REMEMBER:

A. Stay tuned for opportunities in everyday life to share your story.

***1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*** (NIV: gentleness and respect).

*"5 years ago I would have felt the same way, but something happened to me that changed my outlook on life completely."*

*"Have your ideas about God changed since you ... (entered college, got married, etc..)?"*

*"Have you come to a place in your spiritual life that, if you were to die today, you know where you would spend eternity?"*

B. After you share your story, invite the person to accept Jesus: *"That's how I gave my life to the Lord. Would you like to do that too? Is there any reason that you cannot give your life to Him?"*

- C. Keep it concise. Stick to the point. Keep it short and concise, no rabbit trails, just the summary of the main point: Your conversion and new life in Christ.
- D. Avoid “Christianese.” Use everyday language whenever possible, or explain what the terms and concepts mean.
- E. Don’t argue. Don’t debate. Even if you win the debate, you’ll lose the person. Ask a question instead of answering the objection.
  - 1. When Jesus said: Go and make disciples, we might be worried that someone will debate the existence of God, or some fine point of Biblical doctrine.
  - 2. Don’t pressure people to pray or respond when they’re not ready. Rather, ask questions to see what is at the heart of the issue that is keeping them from surrendering to Christ.
  - 3. How much time do we have to carve out to be a witness? Most of us don't have to: we're always around people.
- F. Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is the power of God.
 

***Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.***

***1 Cor. 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.***

  - 1. You do not have to be good with words, be a powerful speaker, etc...
  - 2. The message itself is powerful. The Gospel is the good news of who Jesus is, what He has done, and how your life changes when you open your heart to Him.
 

***Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***
  - 3. Have you received power? Are you relying upon God’s power for your life and when you share with others?
    - a. It takes the power of God to convict hearts and open spiritually blind eyes. You and I are here because somebody prayed for us and God touched our hearts and opened our eyes (2 Cor. 4:4).
  - 4. We are here to represent Jesus Christ to lost and dying world. God could have done this in many other ways, but He choose us to be the bearers of good news.

## V. GET YOUR NETS READY!

*Matt. 4:18-20 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*

*Luke 5:4-11*

*When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."*

*<sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." <sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*

*<sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." <sup>11</sup> So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.*

(c.f. John 21:6) After having caught nothing all night, Jesus tells them to throw their nets on the right side of the boat. They catch 153 fish. The catch is great, but the net did not break.

- A. Get your nets ready. Your story, your experience in God, these flyers.
- B. We are living in the last days before Jesus returns.
  - 1. This is a pivotal generation. More people have come to the Lord in the last 50 years than all of history combined.
  - 2. Do you think that God is interested in bringing others to Himself? If He is, do you believe He might already be active in wooing others to Himself now? What might you discover about God if you were actively participating with Him in this work?

*Prov. 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.*

*Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "ALL AUTHORITY has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of ALL THE NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe ALL THINGS that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you ALWAYS, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

*Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*