

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

HOW “MINI GRACE STORIES” BUILD A BRIDGE TO THE GOSPEL

The process for developing in personal evangelism begins with adopting specific practices as part of a missional lifestyle, praying for open doors of opportunity, looking for a person of peace, engaging in below-the-surface conversations as a matter of course, and in response to those meaningful conversations sharing your testimony or the gospel message itself. In other words, sharing your testimony or the gospel is often “down the line” of engaging with non-Christians. Nevertheless, we begin our equipping for evangelism by developing our testimonies and sharing the gospel message. The reason for this is that we need to be equipped to have these conversations whenever the Lord gives us opportunity. As the Apostle Peter put it:

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...”
(1 Peter 3:15 NIV)

You never know when God will give you the opportunity to have a spiritual conversation with someone where you live, work, or play. That’s why “being prepared” includes developing our personal testimonies with a gospel message in view.

A Common Approach

It is customary to think of giving your testimony in terms of how you came to trust Jesus for salvation. This approach usually has you follow an outline of (1) what your life was like before you became a Christian, (2) how you became a Christian, and (3) what your life is like now after becoming a Christian. There is great value to this approach, because it makes it clear how you became a Christian as an example for the person(s) to whom you are sharing. Some, however, struggle to tell their experience with this format, either because they grew up in the church and do not feel like they have a dramatic story of “before and after” faith in Christ, or because they have trouble figuring out how to naturally share this kind of testimony in normal, everyday conversation.

A Complementary Approach

An complementary approach to a testimony of conversion is sharing a story about the relevance of the gospel for your daily life—a “Mini Grace Story,” if you will. This approach recognizes that Christians and non-Christians often struggle with many of the same issues, whether their own personal sin or the struggles of living in a fallen world. The difference, however, is how one deals with those issues. Christians seek to apply the gospel to these issues of everyday life. We have a different “hope” that we can offer to our friends who are struggling. In essence, this approach applies what you do with the “Gospel Waltz” in terms of a testimony offering hope to a non-Christian and serves as a bridge to a fuller gospel presentation if they are interested in learning more about your perspective and experience from your testimony.

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▶ DRAFT VERSION

A Struggle

“There was a time in my life...”

“One of the things I struggle with is...” (Consider adjectives that describe the issue in your story.)

But God...

How did God meet you in that issue? In what way is Christ relevant to this issue for you? What aspect, truth, or facet of the Gospel was relevant to this issue? What is the “hope” that Jesus and the gospel provides you here?

The Result

“Now I...” / “This helps me, because...” How does recognizing the futility of the counterfeit approach and the motivation of the gospel lead you to approach the issue differently? What choice(s) did you make in response to grace to live or cope differently?

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Transition

See if they are interested in exploring more by asking a question such as:

- “Do you have a story like that?”
- “Does that make any sense to you?”
- “Would you be interested in exploring how God could work in your life in a similar way?”

If they are, you can transition to a fuller gospel presentation.