



**“But God
demonstrates his
own love for
us in this:
While we were
sinners,
Christ died for us.”**

—Romans 5:8, TNIV



Just Walk Across the Room:

GCBC— Week 3

The Power of Story

Prayer and Evangelism Series
March 4,-April 12, 2009

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Week Three

THE POWER OF S T O R Y

"I tell you the truth,
whoever hears my word and believes him
who sent me has eternal life
and will not be condemned; he has
crossed over from death to life."

—John 5:24 (MSG)

**Ready to communicate like a walk-across-the
-room person?**

Realize that ...

1. _____.

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Next Week Prep Work

Have you ever thought that being a Christian necessarily meant that you had to become a "lifestyle referee" to the world around you? Think about this question are Christ-followers under any obligation to play such a role?

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Assignment Activity

[Assignment 1] *Refine your own faith story as necessary.* Then, practice telling it this week with a few believing friends or family members who are willing to rate your story (in a grace-filled environment, of course) on the following four criteria:

- Brevity (you got it done in forty-five to sixty seconds)
- Clarity (you focused on one clear message)
- Simplicity (no "religionese")
- Humility (you weren't pious or haughty)

[Assignment 2] *Telling God's Story.* Take a few minutes to draw the bridge illustration in the space below, explaining the various aspects of the illustration out loud as you go.

[Assignment 3] Always remember that God promises to guide you and to speak through you each time you tell his story. All he asks is for you to remain pliable and available to further his kingdom-building purposes. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 below; then, write a brief prayer thanking God for the truth you find there.

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Proverbs 3:5-6, MSG

Dear God, _____

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2. _____.

6

3. _____.

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VI. **Video Summary and Closing**

- Every Christ-follower has a "before-and-after" story to tell; the goal is learning to tell it effectively.
- A well-told personal faith story leaves the listener feeling engaged and honored.
- A well-told personal faith story gives God the glory and leaves the door open to share his story of redemption.

VII. **Prayer Points**

Thank God for giving each person a story that makes sense once it's viewed inside the larger context of his story.

Pray that every Christ-follower going through this four-week experience would get serious about telling both stories well.

Just imagine the impact Christians could have in this generation if we got bold about telling of the transformational work Christ has accomplished in our lives—and told it well!

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Your "Before"

You have a "before-and-after" faith story.

4. What type of person were you before you met Christ? Below, write down five to ten adjectives that come to mind.

What is the one word in particular that best summarizes your "before" state? Write it here:

Your Encounter with Christ

5. Now describe the circumstances that caused you to submit your life to Jesus Christ. What life-stage were you in? What input did you receive that finally triggered your desire to ask Christ into your life? What was the most significant thing about your making this decision?

Your "After"

6. Now, completing the sentence below, note the primary difference that Christ has made in your life.

Since inviting Christ into my life, I've become

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Simple Steps We Can All Take

*When you speak words of life, of light,
of encouragement, of authenticity, and of grace,
you leave the listener with a deep desire
to know more of this God you know*

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SESSION THREE OUTLINE

The Power of Story

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15b

I. **Last Week:** Review– Overview– Home Work Assignment

BIG IDEA—THE POWER OF STORY

Regardless if they are formally "gifted" in evangelism or not, all Christ-followers can be prepared to engage people in spiritual conversations and do what they can to point people toward faith in God. When conversations take a spiritual turn, it is critical to know how to convey two stories with humility, clarity, and brevity: your own faith story and God's good news story.

II. **This Week Overview:**

Have you ever thought about what makes a bad story bad? This week, through humorous skits, you'll learn firsthand what not to do when sharing your faith story. Elements include:

- Acting as if you're superior to your listener
- Being unclear
- Speaking in "religionese"
- Droning on and on

Then, in hopes of infusing you with the right way to do things, you will hear several well-told faith stories—evidence of God's intervention in people's lives—articulated with clarity, brevity, and humility.

III. **Video Opener and Icebreaker**

Think of a brief story regarding something that has significantly impacted your walk with Christ. Perhaps you or someone you know overcame a devastating loss ... or experienced unparalleled joy during a time of unusual blessing. *What is the story, and what has been the impact on your spiritual journey?*

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IV. **Video Teaching and Observations**

V. **Group Strides Discussion**

1. In this week's video segment, you witnessed the telling of several really bad stories:

- The Long-winded Story that went on ... and on ... and on ...
- The Fuzzy Story that never seemed to get to the point
- The Religionese Story that was laden with Christian insiders' jargon
- The Superiority Story that was filled with pious, haughty language

Which one bothered you the most and why?

2. On the other end of the spectrum, what are a few common denominators you noted in the "good stories" that were told at the end of the video segment?

3. Have a member of your group read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 out loud. Based on these verses, why is it important for Christ-followers to tell their faith-stories in a manner that is simple, succinct, humble, and clear to people who are spiritually unconvinced?