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Sharing Your Testimony

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

153rd General Assembly

- **TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM** in 403 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 12 NOON** in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am *and again* at 12 Noon. The *weekly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The remaining studies for the 2015 General Assembly will be in the book of Romans.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to be serving you. – *Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission*

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

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Tuesday, 10 March 2015

Acts 22 – “Sharing Your Testimony”

Your personal story or testimony of how God drew you to Himself and your walk with Him is one of the most effective and compelling ways to share your faith in Jesus Christ. Scripture references the need for God’s people to be prepared as witnesses of Christ the Lord. If you have not received Christ as Lord, please allow this Bible study to serve as a testimony of why you should do so, *even today*.

First Peter 3:15 (NIV) - But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. 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,

Mark 5:19 (NASB) reveals a case where Jesus had freed a man from demon possession. Jesus “did not let him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you.” Note the Lord’ command for the new believer to share his faith and give witness to God’s mercy. Revelation 12:11 references the saints of God who “overcame” as a result “of the word of their testimony” (NASB). The victory was based upon the death of Christ and their testimony to the value of that death. Your testimony of how you came to faith in Jesus Christ attributes value to the death Jesus suffered for you. Your testimony is a story you need to be proficient in sharing.

WHY SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

1) Love for God and a Desire to Bring Him Glory

- God is glorified when his people give witness to his character and conduct;
- God is glorified when his commandments are heeded;
- God is glorified when others share his grace;
- God’s enemy, Satan, is defeated.

2) Love for People and a Concern for Their Future

- A desire to guide a lost person from darkness to light, and from hopelessness to hope.

THE VALUE OF YOUR TESTIMONY

Most people are interested in the personal stories of others. To be effective in relating the story of your faith in Christ, it must be interesting, well-developed and personal. Just as it is natural and enjoyable to retell personal occurrences such as special occasions, unusual adventures, and life-changing experiences, it should be natural and enjoyable to share your personal testimony.

PREPARING TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

First, to share your testimony, have a confident knowledge of God’s Word. The Word of God enlivened by the Holy Spirit transforms lives. *Second*, model Jesus: reflect his attitudes and actions so people will be receptive to what you have to share. *Third*, pray that God will:

- ❖ give you a passion for the lost and a heart for sharing;
- ❖ provide opportunities to share (Col 4:3);
- ❖ make you sensitive to the opportunities;
- ❖ give you boldness to seize those opportunities to winsomely share your faith (Acts 4:29).

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

Perhaps, it will be helpful to examine how the Apostle Paul shared his testimony in Acts 22. He divided his testimony into three parts:

I. Life prior to Knowing Christ

Acts 22:1-5 (NIV) - “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.” When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.



Capitol Commission Bible Studies
Tuesday (10 March) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 403 CAP
Tuesday (10 March) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP
lunch provided from sponsorship by Walton EMC Natural Gas



Enhancing Trust

A. Identify with your listeners

1. Speak to them in their own language.

Note that Paul decided to speak in Aramaic rather than Greek. His decision was a pleasant surprise because his listeners were hearing their mother tongue. Paul's example instructs us today not because we need to speak a different language, but because our testimony needs to be shared with words that are understandable.

2. Share in ways in which they can identify with you.

Paul spoke to them regarding things that were familiar. My best introductory conversation relates to cooking, reading, or sports. Certainly, it helps to know something with regard to your audience.

B. Expose areas in which they can identify.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| No purpose | * Anger |
| Loneliness | * Selfishness |
| Controlled by a sinful habit | * Pride |

Pick one or two areas, and develop the first component of your testimony from them. Be brief, factual, personal, and specific.

II. How You Came to Know Christ

Acts 22:6-16 (NIV) – “About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ “Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. “‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. “‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. “Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’”

Until this point, Paul's story would be credible to those who heard him. Indeed, they would have to admit that it was true. When you are sharing your testimony with people who knew you in your non-believing days, that is the easy part, and you need to be careful not to spend too much time on that aspect of your life. As you share, you need to make four points understandable: God, humanity, Christ, and response.

1. Share the truth regarding the holy God and sovereign Creator.
2. Share the truth that human beings are a peculiar combination: creatures made in the image of God, and yet, humanity is fallen, sinful, and separated from God.
3. Share the truth regarding Christ Jesus. He is the God-man, the only mediator between God and humanity. He is the sinner's substitute and resurrected Lord.
4. Finally, in sharing the previous points, one must understand the necessity of responding to the gospel. One must believe the message of God's grace – through faith in Jesus Christ – and in believing, to repent of sin.

III. How Knowing Christ Has Changed Your Life

Express how God has helped you address sensitive areas in your life. If there are areas where you still struggle, be honest and share that you are progressively living and maturing in your salvation, and how God is helping you overcome your struggles.

Acts 22:17-22 (NIV) - “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ “‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!”

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Resist the urge to tell your entire life story. Only tell what is relevant to describe your life prior to faith in Christ, including an issue in which someone can identify. Next, share clearly and factually how you came to trust Christ, and how He healed or fulfilled the need or spiritual void in your life. Also include how He has been present in your struggles, employment decisions, including individual, marriage, or family relationships.

Write your story and practice telling it. You should be able to tell it in 3 minutes, or when you have the opportunity take 15 minutes. Your written testimony should be only 600-800 words in length. Remember to use the first person by using words like “I” and “my” when sharing. Avoid preaching or emphasizing moral behavior. One cannot heed the principles of Scripture unless first trusting the Author of the divine Word (i.e. moral behavior is the evidence of a transformed life). Avoid using Christian jargon (i.e. the blood cleanses) and giving the impression that becoming a Christian will remove all heartache, problems, or suffering.

Any conversation can be seized as an opportunity to share Christ. Simply discuss life as you would normally, and be prepared to be obedient as God grants you opportunities. Learning to witness is primarily learning to trust and obey God than it is about improving your skills or learning the “right” method. Success in evangelism is loving the lost, sharing the “good news,” and trusting God for the results (John 6:44; 1 Cor 3:6).

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission's mission, in partnership with the church, is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and promote the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority in the Capitol communities throughout the United States and around the world. Every election cycle brings us hundreds of newly elected legislators into the twenty-four state capitols where we presently have a State Minister. We intend to be there to provide pastoral care for these men and women. *Please join us in this ministry!*