

Episode 2-23: How to Share Your Testimony

Resources:

Books

[Gospel Primer - Milton Vincent](#)

[Gospel Primer Booklet - Milton Vincent](#)

[Ultimate Questions - John Blanchard](#)

[What is the Gospel - Greg Gilbert](#)

[Leading Your Child to Christ - Marty Machowski](#)

[Gospel Story Bible - Marty Machowski](#)

[Beginners Gospel Story Bible - Jared Kennedy](#)

Documents

[Tips for Writing Your Testimony](#)

Transcript:

Janet: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Alexandra: I just want to make it as totally simple and no brainer as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Welcome back friends. Have you ever been totally intimidated or convicted about sharing your faith?

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: Most of us have been. So today we'd like to help you think through how to share your story of coming to faith in a way that could help someone else understand the gospel.

Jocelyn: Well, when I was a kid, I can't remember when it was or where we lived, on the evening news there was this really cool series that ran for a while. It was called something like Everybody's Got a Story. And it was back in the day where they still had really big, thick phone books called the white pages

Janet: called the white pages. Like people don't know what they are.



Jocelyn: Well, I was thinking our younger listeners probably gonna have no idea what we're-- like, what is a phone book? Well, there was this book in some towns, it was like four or five inches thick contained like yellow pages that were business listings and then white pages that were like personal home addresses and personal phone numbers. That's how you knew where people lived. I mean, I remember it being so thick that my grandma used it as a booster seat under little kids' bottoms at the holiday meal table.

Janet: Yes. I remember that too.

Jocelyn: So in this news segment, the news producers would say, everybody's got a story and they would flip in the white pages randomly. And then they would just plop their finger onto a name of the book and then call them on the air. And they'd explain, they were news producers for this evening news and then they would say, everybody's got a story and we know you do too. What's a story from your life that's interesting that you'd like to share with our viewers. So then the news producers would show this a video clip of them going to that person's house, meeting them and hearing these, like, I can remember this one vividly, the guy was standing on his front porch. They held the microphone in his mouth and he just told them some random story about his life. And there were, it was just tons of stories. Like lost love. Children that were miraculously healed or war stories or silly pet stories. I know now as a grown up, like the whole thing was probably all researched.

Janet: Oh yeah. Staged.

Jocelyn: They organized and yeah, it was all staged, but ultimately their point was everybody's got a story. And the stories they came up with to share with the viewing audience were fascinating. It was really true. Everybody really does have a story.

Janet: I have never heard of that, but what a fun thing to do it makes me wanna do that. Like that would be really cool. And it really does highlight the fact that we do all have a story to tell if we take the time to find out.

Jocelyn: Well today on our episode, we're gonna talk about your story in the same way that those news producers knew that everybody has a story. I know each of our listeners also do too, especially the listeners that are believers. So today we're gonna talk about how to share the most important story of your life, which is your testimony of how you came to know and love Jesus. So a lot of our listeners will immediately know what it means when I say the word testimony, but we're gonna start right there and I'm just gonna help you understand what the word testimony means. It means a couple of things. First of all, it means a formal written or spoken statement, especially one that's given in a court of law. Evidence or proof provided by the existence or appearance of something, or a public recounting of a religious conversion or experience. So that word testimony has a weight behind it. It means essentially the proof or evidence of something that's true. So often testimony is given in court under oath, and where you put your hand on the



Bible, you swear to tell the truth and that you're so confident in the validity of what you're about to say that you're actually willing to go to jail if someone finds out that what you've said is a lie. So testimonies are serious.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's a serious kind of conversation. and giving your testimony is something that you take a lot of time to consider, a lot of time to prep for, because the ramifications of the content of your speech will have some sort of effect on people that really can alter their life.

Janet: Yeah. Well, you said that this especially applies to our listeners who are believers. So I just wanna take a minute and say to those of you who are not sure where you stand, first of all, we're really glad you're listening. We'll be sharing our stories as well. And we just pray that God will use that in your life too.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But for those who are believers, are we all ready to go to court? Who is on trial? Is it actually, is it us or is that gonna be Jesus depending on what we're talking about? Do we need to be prepared to present our understanding of the evidence to a judge?

Jocelyn: Well, those are interesting questions and the scripture tells us that there are going to be people who ask us for a statement. Isn't that interesting?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Because the way we live our lives will be the evidence that there's something different about us. And the scriptures tells us that something about Christians will be so different than the world that people will want to be given testimony about why this whole group of seemingly unrelated people consistently handle those circumstances in a consistently different way. So we're gonna start our conversation today by reading that scripture passage. And it's first Peter 3:13 through 17. Janet, would you read that for us?

Janet: Absolutely. Now, who will want to harm you if you're eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what's right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live, because you belong to Christ. Remember, it's better to suffer for doing good if that's what God wants than to suffer for doing wrong.

Jocelyn: So that passage is talking about a distinct setting where Christians are gonna be asked to give testimony, to explain the evidence of why they, usually as a group, consistently act so



different than people who are not Christians. So, Janet, what is the setting that we're talking about in that passage?

Janet: Well, for those who've read first Peter, the whole book is specifically written to prepare Christians in the early church for the suffering they're about to enter into while they're persecuted by the emperor. They're specifically being persecuted because they're Christians who refuse to worship the emperor, and instead they worship the one true God. So in this particular passage, the Christians are acting differently than those around them while they're suffering for doing what's right.

Jocelyn: Right. So instead of worrying or being afraid of those who are threatening them for doing what's right. The Christians were being instructed to worship Christ as the Lord of their life. And in the context of that suffering, they were supposed to be ready to explain to anyone who asked why that would be their response. I really like how the ESV says in verse 15, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason, for the hope that is in you.

Janet: Wow. So Peter, the apostle, is teaching the young church to be ready in advance to give testimony. So he's telling them be prepared. For the reason about why their lives are so different than the lives of those who worshiped the Roman emperor.

Jocelyn: And what really stands out to me in that passage is that it says the believers were going to be asked to make a defense to anyone who asked them for the reason they had hope. So the reason for the hope the Christians displayed while they were suffering, even while they were doing right. So there was just so much hope hidden inside of their responses.

Janet: Wow. So apparently this whole group of Christians. Suffering for doing right. And yet, within those circumstances, they handled it in such a hopeful way that they really just stuck out.

Jocelyn: Yeah. And I would venture to say that a lot of our listeners are probably gonna find themselves in similar situations. The people all around them are consistently operating in a similar way. In many cases, living however they want, thinking only of what will satisfy them or give them happiness or make their life better in some way. And there they are, the Christian, looking like they're swimming against the current but with so much hope. That does tend to stick out.

Janet: Yeah. And it should, the way Christians live their lives, following the steps of their savior and shepherd, that should be, and it is inherently different than those that live their lives for themselves.

Jocelyn: Yeah. The scriptures tell us to be ready. So when you stick out for living biblically doing what is right with hope and joy, be ready to tell why. So the Christian who lives differently



than the world with a Bible as their source of truth and Jesus as their king, they're gonna stick out. And that's a good thing. So when you stick out, and people wanna know, why will you be ready to give a reason why you can live a life that sticks out and is so different than everyone around you, but you live that way with hope.

Janet: Okay, well then let's talk about how we can be ready for that day.

Jocelyn: Cause it's coming. That's one of the things that I want our listeners to understand. There should be a day where people ask you for why your life is different. If you're a believer living in this world Jesus' way, everything about you is gonna be different. And anyone with ears and eyes is gonna wanna know why. So one of the ministries in our church that I love to serve in is called mom to mom. And every year, the week before Easter, we have this class where we talk about the importance of being prepared to give your testimony. And we talk through some simple steps about how to prepare a testimony, and we specifically apply it to moms with young kids, cuz that's the group that we're talking to.

Janet: Sure.

Jocelyn: And there are lots and lots of ways to be prepared to share your testimony. And here's one way. There are other ways. We're not saying this is the only way that-- be creative.

Janet: Sure.

Jocelyn: But if you've never prepared your testimony before, here are a couple of simple steps you could take to be ready to share your story.

Janet: So why don't you just walk us through those steps so we can be a little more confident.

Jocelyn: So to be ready to share your testimony. I think of talking about three basic points. Number one, what was my life before accepting Christ and living for him? Number two, how did I receive Christ? And number three, how has my life changed because of him?

Janet: I mean, that sounds pretty easy.

Jocelyn: It's super easy. Like I was even thinking just when I was doing laundry the other day, just about these three steps. It's so easy. If you remember before Jesus, how did I get Jesus, and what has happened since Jesus? We're gonna briefly chat through each of those three points and then we're actually gonna share some examples of testimonies. It's important to be ready to share about the hope that's in you, but it's also important to be ready to share that story that's appropriate to the situation.

Janet: Yeah.



Jocelyn: So we know that our interactions with people throughout the day are gonna look totally different. Sometimes you're gonna be chatting with someone in a checkout line and you'll have like a couple seconds.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And other times you'll have a big, long conversation with a friend and those are both gonna look totally different. Sometimes you're gonna be on your way out the door when you have this bonus on the fly conversation. And sometimes that conversation is gonna be planned and thought through. In any case it's important to be ready, be ready to share the testimony of how Jesus has changed your life, and be ready to fit it to a variety of context and situations. So I'm going to share an example of a super short testimony. Like somebody just asked me a question about my life and my faith, and I'm in the checkout lane on the way to an important appointment. And I don't wanna lose this opportunity to drop the truth, that kind of a testimony.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And then I've asked Janet to share a really long testimony and that would be like the kind you would share with a friend, maybe when you scheduled a time to talk about this more like they've been asking lots of questions and you wanna give like the full version.

Janet: Okay, well, first though, let's hear more about the three steps of how to craft a testimony.

Jocelyn: Okay. So these steps are gonna be available in a handout in our show notes. So feel free to just listen now. I don't want anyone to have to feel like they have to furiously write down any tips or anything that I'm sharing. We're gonna have this available that you can print off and just think about. But here are a couple of hints to start with. I encourage you to write your testimony out word for word, at least once. It's just good to think through it. You know, put your thoughts into sentences. And secondly, I say shoot for about three minutes. like I said, I asked Janet to share a much longer testimony that you would share with someone who's shown an interest and wants the big version. But a standard testimony is probably gonna be like two or three minutes long. Thirdly, make sure the testimony is yours. Don't just follow this formula. If this isn't the way that you would normally talk, then don't do it this way. Don't just, you know, fill your words in for the blank spaces. Make this your story of your life and write it the way that you would speak, so it sounds natural. None of us writes the way we speak.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So write it the way that you would speak. And here's something that you may not think about. Don't use evangelical words like born again or redeemed or saved or salvation or conversion. Those are important words. A Christian who has studied God's word probably knows what they mean, but they're gonna be very confusing to an unbeliever.



Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And it's gonna feel like you're in some sort of a cult where you have this special vocabulary and only the cool people get to know what you're talking about. like I mean, think about who you're sharing your testimony to. You're sharing it to people who are not saved.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And they're not gonna know any of those words. So use words that an unsaved person would really easily understand.

Janet: And that may take you some time to think through.

Jocelyn: It would.

Janet: Cuz we're used to using our Christian-eze.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: So it's good to be prepared for. How would I say that? Not changing the meaning, but say it in a way that's intelligible to them.

Jocelyn: Right. The way I share my testimony to a group of biblical counselors who are certified is gonna sound very different than the way I share to someone who I've met in farmers' market.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Who is clearly not interested in Jesus.

Janet: But you're not changing the content.

Jocelyn: The content's the same, but the words will probably be said differently.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: In step one of my testimony, I'll talk about my life before accepting Christ and living for him. And some of the questions that I'll think about in that section is what was my life like that will relate most to this non-Christian. And I personally imagine specific people I'll be actually talking to, like, I have a friend that is an ardent atheist. So when I would talk to her, how would I craft this to a way that she would understand? Secondly, what did my life revolve around the most? Like where did I get my security or my happiness from, and how did those areas let me down? So when sharing regarding your life before Christ, here's a couple of things I just wanna encourage you. You really do not need to mention specifics about a sordid past. In some ways when you do that, you're really glorifying the sin and that would not honor Christ.



Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So we don't, need to share big details. You can share summaries that would make it clear where you're coming from without getting all nitty gritty about the details. I also would encourage you not to mention denominations or other churches or organizations or individuals by name, especially if it was a negative thing. Like you can say, I was a part of a church that didn't have a strong emphasis on the gospel, without saying I was a member of this church.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So it's just, you don't want them to come away from the conversation feeling like, wow, that girl just slandered this group to me.

Janet: Cause it's not about that. It's about the gospel.

Jocelyn: Right. Jesus is the hero of this story you're about to share. And then finally, I would say don't slander a member of your family or if you're married,

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Your husband. Like, you know, sometimes women start following Jesus and their husbands don't. And so their husbands may never become a believer. And so you don't want your heartfelt story of your conversion to at the same time, completely throw your husband under the bus. There are ways that you can say black and white, what is the truth without making your husband look like the bad guy or unnecessarily defaming him?

Janet: Right. And I think like you said, because the hero of the story is Jesus,

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: It's not me. So you don't need to know how hard it was.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: I can tell you it was lonely, cuz we were walking different paths. Period. And then it's really about Jesus. And that will be helpful to remember as they're doing that.

Jocelyn: And the enemy is Satan, not your husband.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Not a different denomination. Like this is about Jesus being victorious over sin and death and Satan. And



Janet: Excellent.

Jocelyn: people who are not following Christ will be living ways that honor Satan. we don't need to sordidly slander people. That

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: Will be hurtful.

Janet: Good. So, I mean, this is a little humbling to talk about what I was like before, but pretty easy.

Jocelyn: It is pretty easy.

Janet: I kind of know what I was like.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Okay. So now what?

Jocelyn: Okay, so in step two, I'll talk about how I received Christ. And here are some of the questions that I'll think about. When was the first time I heard and understood the gospel or was exposed to dynamic Christianity? What were my initial reactions to finding out that God loves me? Like, isn't that beautiful? I remember people in my life that was the first time I saw Christianity lived out. It was irresistible. So that kind of idea.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: When and how did I recognize that I'm a sinner and I'm separated from a relationship with God because of that sin? When and how did I believe in Jesus, and acknowledge that his death on the cross could pay for my sins? And then when, and how did I confess my sin to God and ask for forgiveness of my sins? And what does it mean for me now to be in a relationship with God because my sins have been forgiven?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And a couple of hints on this section when you're relating how you came to Christ, be specific about how to receive Christ as savior and what it means. When someone leaves this conversation, you want them to be able to replicate what you've done. So you're not just saying, and then I became a believer. Say, I was a sinner, recognized my need for a savior, and I chose to trust that Jesus's death could pay for my sins. I just on the fly, I said one sentence that was essentially the gospel. You don't want someone to leave this conversation and be like, I'm not exactly sure how you do that. It sounds kind of magical or mystical, like, oh, you have to be in like a special club. Ooh.



Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: Like you don't exactly know what happened. Like the gospel is very clear. I was a sinner that was separated from God, and Jesus made the debt of my sin payment possible. And I trusted that his death would pay for my sin.

Janet: Well, this is the part where we might get a little more nervous, but we can remember that we're sharing what actually happened.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: How we came to understand and believe. So be sure to acknowledge God's holiness and goodness, your sinfulness, and then what Jesus did for you. It's primarily again about Jesus.

Jocelyn: Right. So finally in step three, we'll discuss what has happened since I accepted Christ. Some questions to consider are things like this. What were some specific changes and illustrations about the changes that Christ made in me so far. So when I'm relating the changes, which took place after receiving Christ, it's really important to attribute those changes to Christ. Like I didn't just start becoming a better person. I didn't just stop lying all the time randomly. Like, oh, I don't know how it happened. Like, no. Jesus saved me. And then his truth changed me.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: And here are some examples of how I was changed. Why am I motivated differently now? And in what ways am I still growing? And then you could even finish with a Bible passage that motivates your life as a follower of Jesus. So I've asked Janet to share a long version of her testimony. And this is gonna be, you know, like an example of what someone sat down with you and said, Hey, I'd like to hear more about your relationship with Christ. You've thought it through. You don't necessarily have to read it, but this is something that you've put some time into thinking through. So why don't you share your testimony with us, Janet?

Janet: Well, okay. I was raised in a fairly religious home. I thought I was a pretty good person. And as I look back, I clearly wasn't. But that was my perception of myself. Later, I can remember when I talked to my kids about some things I was involved in, my sweet at the time young son said, I thought you said you were a good kid. Yeah. Well, I thought so too, until I looked back with clearer vision.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But in the midst of all of that, I lived for the acceptance of others. And I battled my own personal version of an eating disorder for a while. I was convinced that if I hit a certain number on the scale, I'd be much happier. I thought I'd feel better about me. And I thought that others



would like me more too. I also battled a terrible migraine-ish kind of headache that lasted for months. And I actually believe it was related to pressure that I didn't know how to handle. I ended up on some medicine. I will never forget going to that neurologist. And he said to me, so how often do you get these headaches? And I said, I've only had one. And he said, really? I said, for the last three months. And I'd be rolling on the floor, holding my head.

Jocelyn: Oh goodness.

Janet: It hurt so bad. So he gave me some medicine that they had to increase from 10 to 20 to 25 to 50 milligrams. By the time they got it to 50, it was effective, but that was my 10th grade of high school. And it was not unusual for me to be so tired from the medicine, I don't know that there was a week that I went all five days.

Jocelyn: Wow.

Janet: In the middle of all that, I was terrified to speak in front of other people, all part of the acceptance of others idolatry that I had. There was that enslaving fear of man that came out in all areas of my life. Yep. That was me. To an irrational level. When I was little, I wouldn't answer the phone. If my mom couldn't get to it and she asked me to. She told me that I would always tell her I'm scared to it. I'm not gonna do it. Well, that's cute when you're two, but it didn't get much better. I hated talking to strangers, even ordering food at a restaurant. And I'd talk so softly and quickly that they'd give me the wrong food items. And I would never tell them. I remember getting in the car with a Coke slushie and my mom saying, you don't even like Coke slushies. And I'm like, I know. Well, why'd you get that flavor? Well, they couldn't hear me and I wasn't gonna correct them. So I just took it and left. To my shame senior in high school-- so I'm getting older and it's not getting better-- I was awarded some money for college from a local men's service club and they had a dinner to recognize all the people they gave money to. I didn't know it, but once I got there, they asked if I would walk up on the stage

Jocelyn: oh man

Janet: and accept the check and say, thank you. How unreasonable, when you've given me money.

Jocelyn: When you've given your money.

Janet: Yes, I was so terrified. And that fear led to a fierce stubbornness. They called my name and I said, no.

Jocelyn: Oh wow.

Janet: Can you imagine? I didn't even go up. I'm totally how ungrateful and my parents were sitting there with me at this dinner.



Jocelyn: How embarrassing. Yeah.

Janet: And they're look at me and I'm going, no. And second of all, can we just say, if you don't wanna draw attention to yourself,

Jocelyn: just get up and go.

Janet: Just get up. Everyone is staring at me.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Because I wouldn't get up, but that's how irrational my fear was.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: I didn't go. Later. I ended up in a very unhealthy relationship thinking that having this person would do what nothing else had done. We were both in the relationship for incredibly selfish reasons. And I don't, we'll just leave it to your imagination.

Jocelyn: You can imagine how - Wonder that went.

Janet: But God. In his kindness, he worked through that relationship specifically to get me to a campus ministry as a freshman in college, Campus Bible Fellowship. And it was there on October 13th that I made a profession of faith and I understood the good news of the gospel. I remember Bev who was a missionary with CBF, explained to me that Jesus did what I couldn't do, that he lived a perfect life. And then he died to pay for the sin that I had done. That he offered me eternal life, if I would trust him alone. Well, because I was raised going to church and hearing about Jesus, I thought I was already a Christian. So she asked me, would you like to know for sure you're going to heaven? And here's what I said, you know what I think I probably will. And then she said, but would you like to know for sure. And I said, well, I mean, you know, in church, sometimes we say this phrase, I lift up my heart to the Lord and I do that. So I've given my heart to the Lord, I think. I think I'm alright. She said, I don't even know how many times she said it at least three. Would you like to know for sure? I finally said, well, yeah. And then I prayed. And that was the first time I truly humbled myself and confessed that it was only Jesus that could deliver me and I was gonna live for him. After I prayed, I'm sure I surprised her by telling her I was overwhelmed with sadness. And she asked me why. And I said, you know, if this is true, I have a lot of loved ones who are not going to heaven. And that makes me really sad.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Because for the first time I truly understood and placed my faith in Christ alone. And for me, one of the first things that did would help me see my family



Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: differently as well.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So looking back, I see several other times before that, that I was exposed to the gospel or at least parts of it, but I didn't understand it. I was fearful of a fiery hell. I heard about that. But that's all I understood before that day. I remember being at a youth event with a friend where people were praying and some were raising their hands to accept Christ. And I think I raised my hand. I had no idea what was happening. I remember working at an ice cream shop and I was 15 and I had a coworker tell me about the lake of fire and that I don't wanna go there. And I think she was sharing the gospel, but that's all I remembered. So I went to a leader at my church. And said, do you know anything about this lake of fire thing? Cuz like I don't wanna go.

Jocelyn: That's a little freaky.

Janet: Yeah. And he said, don't worry about. There's nothing to do about it anyway. Great.

Jocelyn: Oh. What terrible advice.

Janet: Yeah, but that was good enough for me. I didn't wanna worry about it. And then to realize when God opened my eyes. He drew me to himself. And that helps me to remember now that I know Jesus, sometimes it's hard to understand how someone can hear the gospel and totally misunderstand it.

Jocelyn: Totally. Yeah.

Janet: It's good for me to remember that I was the same way. And it reminds me to pray for God to open blind eyes and deaf ears, just like mine were. Well, the woman who led me to Christ disciplined me for three years. My enslaving fears didn't go away without a battle. And while I'm not enslaved, it's still a battle. Early on, she asked me how I thought things were going in our campus group. And I explained, well, you know, people are polite, but I feel left out. People don't include me. I told her, they'll come up and say, hi, how you doing? And then they all talk about what they did over the weekend, but nobody invited me to go. Of course, I didn't mention the fact that I never initiate and I'm standing by myself. Because that's not my problem. I'm the new person. They're supposed to make all the effort.

Jocelyn: They should be reaching out. Yeah.

Janet: Wise beyond what I could imagine, she explained, you know what? Well, you can't change something from the outside. I would like to put you in charge of greeting all visitors. I'm like, are you kidding me? Did you just hear me? I'm scared of everyone. I don't talk to people. They're



supposed to talk to me. But, how do you say no? When you just complained about how rude everyone is and then you go, no, thank you.

Jocelyn: And we'd like you to be part of the solution.

Janet: Yeah. No, thank you. I'll be rude too. So I couldn't do it. So she knew I was terrified. I had a packet of information and I had to go up to every visitor every Friday night and share it with them and talk to them. She helped me. We came up with five questions that you could ask anyone in that room to get a conversation started.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: And oh I leaned on those, cuz there was nothing natural about any of that for me. It was terrifying and so good. and it really grew in me. I look at just how the Lord used that. There such a sensitivity. I had to notice whoever was new. I still can't stand to see somebody sitting alone. And that's from her. She was wise and God was gracious.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: I also remember her asking me to give my testimony to a women's missionary group at our church. Well, at a different church that supported her as a missionary. And I very kindly explained to her that I don't do that. I can talk to one person, maybe two to three at a time, but no more. And then she very kindly and you'd have to know Bev. She is very kind.

Jocelyn: I do know Bev.

Janet: She just very kindly explained that anyone who's been saved by Christ should be able to talk about it. Kind of what we're talking about today.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So she helped me write my testimony for the first time. What was I gonna say? And it was so sweet. We wrote it all out. And then I don't remember now what it said, but at the very bottom we wrote in like five words that were really big and bold.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: And she said at any time, the worst thing that happens to people when they get stuck, is they ramble. When they don't know what to do, they start rambling.

Jocelyn: That's great advice.



Janet: And they're going, I don't know how to get off right now. I just keep talking. So she said, if at any point you freeze look down and the big words you see at the bottom, just say them and get off the stage.

Jocelyn: It was like a good concluding sentence?

Janet: Whatever. Yeah. That you could say at any point. And it was great. So I could just read that. And I remember getting up there and there was one older woman in particular who was listening with such a sweet smile on her face that I looked at her and I told her my whole story. And when I was done, I went up and thanked her later. And I'm gonna encourage anybody listening to this warmly, smiling and engaging with whoever's speaking, it really matters.

Jocelyn: Oh, totally.

Janet: It was so helpful to me. Bev was also the first one who ever told me that she saw leadership qualities in me. Nobody had ever said that before, and it really encouraged me. Over the years she loved me. She taught me. And she helped me learn how I could trust God more and more and fear people less.

Jocelyn: What a blessing for how she invested in you!

Janet: Oh, it was amazing. And it really did instill in me a passion for discipleship. Eventually while I was in college, I taught a girl's Sunday school class, and it was evident I did not know how to help them practically. One sweet girl there doubted her salvation frequently because of sin in her life. And all I knew to do was pray with her again and again, cuz all I could think is, well maybe she's not. Oh my word it'd be terrible if we didn't pray again. So we'd pray. Years and years and years later, now that I'm in Lafayette, I've had all this training. And I thought about her occasionally. I can't even explain the series of events where this would happen. I came up here and I saw her.

Jocelyn: Oh, crazy.

Janet: Years later. And she had come to Christ and really understood it and was involved in counseling training.

Jocelyn: That's so cool!

Janet: I was like oh, my word, how big is God? Because

Jocelyn: That's so neat.

Janet: All I knew to, and I told her, I said, all I did was pray with you over and over that you would be saved. I had progressive sanctification no idea. So that means while I was down there,



I started hearing about this counseling training up in Lafayette, Indiana. Long story short that I won't get into. I moved up here so I could be trained. And God has continued to grow me more and more all because of his grace and patience.

Jocelyn: And I think anyone who knows you now would just be totally shocked to think that you were afraid to talk to people.

Janet: Totally.

Jocelyn: Afraid of knowing what they thought of you. And wouldn't say what was right. Like God has revolutionized you.

Janet: Only God.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Only God.

Jocelyn: Thank you so much for sharing that with us. It's so cool to hear your whole big salvation story all explained out. And you can just see, like, thinking through those three points really shaped your testimony. What was your life like before Christ?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: How did you receive Christ? And how is your life different since Christ has come into your life?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So I actually have a tattoo on my arm that I use to share my testimony in a super short way. We used to sell at farmer's market where you have this like bipolar relationship with customers either there's 40 people in your line and you have five seconds to check 'em out.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Or you have big periods of nobody and just waiting for customers, and you just chat with anybody because you're standing there being kind of bored. So those settings gave me the context to learn how to share the gospel in a variety of effective ways. So sometimes I have a minute and sometimes I have five, but I wanna be ready all the time to share my testimony. If anyone asks, why I'm different. Facing me, my tattoo says my life for me, and there's a big X that crosses it out. And the side that's facing my customer says my life for yours. And people love talking about tattoos. They always ask me their meaning and mine's kind of weird. So it comes up a lot. But I mean, Especially like my life for yours. What does that mean? Like everyone in the world thinks you only live once, live your best life now.



Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: But I have really tried to fashion my entire life loving and serving others and not living for myself. And I want them to notice that anyway possible through my life, through my words, through my tattoo, whatever. So when someone asks and I only have a second, I say this super short little paragraph, but it's all of the gospel all in one. And it's something like this. I was living completely for myself. And as a result of that, I got into some really big legal trouble, and I actually was sentenced to die for the bad things that I had done, but something really amazing happened. My judge told me there was a way to have those big crimes paid for and to get my life back. He offered his son to accept my death penalty for me. So I could walk free. I couldn't believe that anyone would do that for me. So of course I accepted. His son died for me, so I wouldn't have to. And it completely changed my life. Ever since then. I've been trying to live the way the judge's son did. He gave his son for me. So now it's my goal to live my life for others. So if there's any way I can use my life to serve you, I'd love to know. And it often led to really practical things like getting a chair for someone, or getting them a bottle of water or listening to them in their sorrow. Like so many opportunities came up because my whole mentality was I'm gonna live my life for you, the way that Jesus has lived his life for me. So, it's a short little way of explaining a testimony without really giving a ton of details.

Janet: Yeah. I love that. Cuz you just modeled for us a testimony that's universal.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: What you said is true for every one of us, you didn't give any personal details about your life specifically. So, whoever you're talking to, should be able to relate to it.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Very different from what I just shared. And I hope that helps our listeners understand it's gonna be different in different situations.

Jocelyn: Right. There's also instances where I'll have a little more time and I know the person better, or they'll ask questions and I'll, you know, follow up with answers. So I'd share a little bit longer or explain it a little bit more or share maybe some more personal details of my life story. Just I shape it to the person who's listening, but the steps are the same. What was my life like before? How was I introduced to Christ and how is my life different now? And so sharing a testimony is essentially sharing the gospel, the proclamation of good news that a victory over sin and death has taken place. And prepping to share your testimony is simply, it's really just an exciting time to review the gospel for yourself. That's the point of a testimony is you're sharing the gospel. So when I share the gospel, I generally share it something like this. Creation. Jesus created this entire universe for himself. Everything that exists was created by Jesus for Jesus. It all belongs to him and he made it because he wanted a universe on which to pour out his loving



kind faithfulness that would glorify God. And Jesus wanted his humans to live for his purposes and with his standards of right and wrong. The fall happened when the humans in this universe decided they didn't wanna live for Jesus and they rebelled against him. When that rebellion happened, they received the penalty for their refusal to believe in obey. Jesus, the creator said that living outside of the way he'd created them to live would result in death. Spiritual death, right now. And physical death eventually. And living against God's ways kills you. And then the next point of the gospel is redemption. At the perfect time in human history, Jesus, the creator entered into his created universe and took on the body of a human while remaining completely God. He lived his life according to God's purposes and standards without being rebellious. And then he offered his perfect life as the payment for humans' rebellion. He was murdered on the cross for sins he didn't commit. And then he was raised to life again after three days. God accepted the payment Jesus provided, and he's offering that death payment to be applied to anyone who believes. All you have to do is believe that Jesus is the son of God and that his death could pay for your sins. Anyone who believes in Jesus to pay for their sins is now able to live in a good relationship with God and receive help for having a good life now and later after they die. And then the next part of the gospel is restoration. Because Jesus did that, God said that Jesus is the king of the whole universe. And one day he's coming back to earth to take possession of this land and to rule over it, along with all those who believe and follow him. Everything that is wrong with the world will be made right. And then the final part of the gospel is response. Have you ever heard about this before? How did you respond to this great news? Have you ever asked Jesus to pay for your sins so that you can have a good relationship with God again, and everything that's wrong with your life can be made right? The good news of the gospel is essentially telling the story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration, and then asking the person, listening to you, what their response is gonna be.

Janet: Excellent. That's really helpful too, because remembering just a few key words is gonna help us ensure that we explain all that we need to in order for the other person to understand what it would look like to truly trust what Jesus has done.

Jocelyn: Yep, exactly. I think about those five words frequently, and I talk about them in counseling cases almost every single week. Like, so where are we? What are we talking about? Where does it fall in the story of the gospel? Is this about creation, fall, redemption, restoration, or your personal response? I think it's good. As we close to think about just a couple of last minute tips. And my biggest tip, and you can tell from this tip that I talked to, a lot of moms, is to shy away from sharing your testimony or talking about salvation as if it was just asking Jesus into your heart. I find that it's much more accurate to the scriptures to explain the good news out to describe it, explain it out, and make sure the person who's listening to me knows that salvation is a bigger thing than just asking Jesus into your heart.

Janet: Yeah.



Jocelyn: Salvation is about being created for Jesus and being made to live with his standards of right guiding my life and being able to be returned to that original purpose after my rebellion, because my rebellion has been paid for, I'm not just getting out of hell or asking Jesus into my heart, which I find to be scripturally a little too nebulous. It's about saying I was wrong to live however I wanted. I need my sin debt to be paid for. And now I'm going to return to live the way I was created to live, according to what God said is the right way to live, because I love the person who saved me . And so I really found that difficult with little kids and I, really struggled to know how to talk to my kids about it.

Janet: Right

Jocelyn: until I asked my friend, Joy for help. She explained that sharing the gospel with our kids is the same as sharing the gospel with our adult friends. And so she explained it to me like this. She said, I explained to my kids that I expect them to obey me just like Jesus teaches them to do, but they would never be able to obey me without Jesus helping them. They would need to give up their rebellion and submit to him first, before they would ever be able to obey me. And that's exactly how we shared the gospel with our kids over and over and over until they came to the place where they received that good news and said, yes, I do want to obey you. I realize I cannot obey you unless Jesus helps me to obey you. And my biggest problem is that I have separation between him and me,

Janet: my own rebellion

Jocelyn: and I need my sin to be taken care of. So it really comes down to why you were created. I mean, I was created to live for God and his glory. The problem of our rebellion and Jesus being the solution to the rebellion so that I can be returned to living for him. What kind of final tips do you have Janet?

Janet: Well, I like that one about not asking Jesus into our heart because I don't even see that in scripture.

Jocelyn: I really don't. I've tried to find it.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And I just really don't see that. And I don't know where it started.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And I can understand the logic of what we're trying to say, but it's just really an it's a summarization of the gospel that is not appropriate.

Janet: Right. Well, cuz it, there's no responsibility on my part.



Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: So there's no acknowledgement.

Jocelyn: It's nebulous. Like what does that mean?

Janet: Yeah. So I like that one. Just the other thing that I would mention just encourage our listeners to remember we know that we are saved by faith and believing in Christ alone. That means we're not even saved by our prayer. In my story. I remember when I humbled myself, and it was when I prayed so that could lead someone to say, oh, she got saved because she prayed. But for others. And I think including you, Jocelyn, they may not remember exactly when they prayed or they may not be able to say, I know this is the moment I became a Christian.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: We're not saved by knowing when it happened.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: We're saved by knowing what we believe, what am I trusting in?

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: That's what matters.

Jocelyn: And that's true. if I were to give you a more personal version of my testimony, I really don't know when I became a believer.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I know there were two distinct times when I, like I prayed I don't wanna go to hell and another time when I was like, I cannot continue living life in a way other than what Jesus has said.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And I can't do it without his help. So I don't know which of those times it happened, but I know right now I am a believer. I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I know that I'm a sinner and that sin separated me from God. And Jesus was the only way that sin debt could be paid. And now, as I've been redeemed to my original purposes, I am walking more and more in step with Jesus Christ. It has bothered me a lot over the years that I don't know when that happened. But what I've found is, as I've shared my story with other people, it has been an encouragement for them to know it doesn't matter that you know when it happened, it matters that you are confident



Janet: on what you believe

Jocelyn: on what you believe

Janet: and what you're trusting

Jocelyn: and what you're trusting

Janet: Yeah. Yep. I love that.

Jocelyn: Some of our favorite resources for understanding the gospel are gonna be listed in our show notes as links. We both love the booklet, the Gospel Primer, and we're gonna link that. There's also a shorter version, which is the gospel primer booklet, which is just a, you know, a minimal version

Janet: Just part two, which is just the gospel section. I love it.

Jocelyn: Just the gospel section. It has less words. and more opportunity for not being overwhelmed by such a big book. There's also a booklet that you introduced me to called Ultimate Questions. I really like that little small pamphlet. There's a couple other books. What is the Gospel? And there's a very helpful booklet called Leading Your Child to Christ, which I really love, which we're linking in the show notes. And then two specific resources for kids for like elementary age kids. There's a book called the Gospel Story Bible and for little kids, there's the Beginner's Gospel Story Bible. Those are all really helpful resources to understand the gospel and to think about how your life and the gospel intersect. So I would encourage you to be ready. Be ready to share the reason you have hope when people notice how different your life is. Be ready to share the story of Jesus in your life. It's the most important story you have. Everybody's got a story. What is yours? The opportunities we're gonna have to share the evidence of the reason our life has changed can seriously impact those that hear. And the ramifications for someone who hears about Jesus will be life changing. Not only just for this life, but on into eternity.

Janet: Absolutely. Completely agree. Thank you so much, Jocelyn, for leading us, as we thought through this, it was good for me to think back through what God had done in my life again. It's always such a good reminder of who I am when I'm not abiding close to Christ, and how much we have to be thankful for.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So thank you. I hope listeners that will give you an opportunity for those of you who know Jesus to think back to what you were like before and be able to thank him for what he's done. For those of you who are not sure, I pray that you would be willing to consider what we've talked about. Look at those scriptures and Jocelyn, and I would love if you have questions on that and



you wanna reach out through the email. We would be happy to interact with you in that way as well. Thank you for joining us and we'll see you next time.

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