



Mentoring In Christ

Discussion #3: Your Story

GOAL: To help a person see with greater clarity God's transforming work in his/her life and prepare to share that story with other people as a way of sharing the gospel.

For The Mentor

What do we mean by this this concept?

Being in relationship with God is transforming in a person's life. The gospel message is that we go from spiritually dead to spiritually alive. There's life and forgiveness in relationship with Christ. And God makes us new through the work of the Holy Spirit. The story of how God is transforming our lives is one of the most powerful evidences for God's reality in our world to our friends and family. When we talk about 'your story' we are talking about helping a student realize how God is transforming and making a difference in his/her life so much that we could share that with others.

Helpful passages?

- **Mark 5:1-20** – This is a great story of Jesus' ability to transform a person's life. This man goes from totally out of control to in full control and eager to follow Jesus. Jesus' encouragement was not for this man to come with him but instead go and share the story of what God has done for him with the people in his life.
- **Acts 1:1-8, Acts 3:1-4:22 (Especially Acts 4:13-20)** – Jesus' plan for missions is that the gospel would be shared to all nations starting in Jerusalem. His means to do this is through his followers who were going to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be 'witnesses.' That's the key word in this text for this discussion. A witness simply tells the story of what they saw and experienced. That's all we're asked to do. As the church begins, this is simply what we see this ordinary men doing. They are proclaiming Jesus powerfully and clearly in tough circumstances and people are taking note that they were with Jesus and were simple men, yet they spoke with authority.
- **Acts 26:1-32** – One of my favorite stories of Paul defending his faith. How he defends his faith and preaches the gospel is by telling his story of what God has done in his life. This is clear also in Philippians 3:4-14 & Galatians 1:11-17, and 1 Timothy 1:12-17, where Paul alludes to his story of transformation as a way of furthering understanding of the gospel.
- **1 Peter 3:8-15** – Peter's encouragement to handling false accusation and hurt is to consistently live out the new life you have in Christ and to trust his ability to take care of offensives. Living out your new life in Christ with the hope that you have in Christ is a powerful testimony to those who might even falsely accuse you.

Why this matters?

If God calls us to be his 'witnesses,' then it becomes important that we are well aware of what we have seen and experienced in our relationship with Christ-We need to know our own story. Seeing God's transforming work in our lives builds our trust in him and our confidence that he is at work in our life. Being able to share our story with other people is one of the best ways to plant the gospel into real life. When we can share what God has done in our lives, people can't argue with what God has done. They may say that they don't think God is good or they don't believe that he is the creator, etc. But if they know me, they have to be honest about how they have seen my life changed over time. And if I'm saying that God produced that change in my life, this can't be argued. Much like the demon-possessed man or the disciples after healing the crippled man, those who are questioning who Jesus is or the message of disciples must admit that a life has been transformed.

An Approach for Discussion:

The approach for this discussion could be as simple as both people sharing their individual stories. You could start with some talking about what it means to be a 'witness' and reading some of the stories in the scriptures above. But you want to quickly get to a moment where you are inviting the mentee to share his/her story. It can help if you as a mentor share your story first and then begin to invite the other person to do the same thing. After sharing stories, I find it is good to affirm things in your mentees story that are unique or exciting or that you have seen in their life. As you can say things like, "That's really cool that God has..." or "We seem to both have in common in our stories..." or "I bet a lot of people can identify with your story when you say..." These kinds of statements show

that you are listening and build their confidence in the significant parts of their stories. A good way to finish this discussion might be to help your mentee find a person to share their story with or a place where they can share their story with others in praise to God.

A few things to watch for in this exercise or seek to do:

- 1) **Feeling inadequate** – Most people feel like other people’s stories are way more dramatic and exciting than their own. God has dramatically changed other people’s lives, but not my own—I have a boring story. This is only true if they don’t know Christ. If they know Christ than their story is significant and dramatic. Sometimes we just need to share it with others to find out how unique and significant it is. Looking to draw that out for people and encourage them in this false feeling of inadequacy is key to this exercise.
- 2) **Unbelief exposed** – There is a chance that someone who says he or she is a Christian may not have any way in which God has changed his/her life. This exercise can expose the fact that God has not worked because this person has never received Christ. Never put things in people’s mouths for them when the answer is, nothing. God hasn’t done anything. Instead, ask them some more questions about the gospel and when they (If ever) has received Christ. If the answer is never, then take time to share your story of transformation with that person. You can start simply by saying, “Well can I tell you about how God has changed my life?”
- 3) **A place to share your story** – This exercise is most helpful if your mentee has a clear place to share his/her story in the coming weeks. Ending the discussion with a challenge to share your story with: 1) A friend, 2) your small group, 3) your family, or 4) Youth Group is really helpful for students being more confident to recall the story of what God has done in his/her life at any moment God opens the door.
- 4) **Make a worksheet and takes notes for your mentee** – It often helps the exercise of thinking about your story if you as a mentor make up a simple worksheet and fill it out for your mentee as they answer some of the questions you ask them. The worksheet can just have the questions from the exercise below. As you ask them they questions, write their answers down (or the key ideas from their answers).

Discussion with Mentee

Before you read

- What’s one of your favorite stories? What makes a good story?
- People tend to like person stories (have you ever noticed that people love them on TV, it’s a huge part of sports broadcasting (telling the personal stories of athletes you are watching, etc.). What is powerful about a real life personal story?

Passage(s): Read & Discuss

Read: Mark 5:1-20

- What was this man’s life like before he met Jesus? How do you think that affected the people around him (parents, friends, siblings)?
- Why do you think this man wanted to go with Jesus?
- What do you think it was like when this man went back home to the people he knew before? What do you think it was like for him to talk about Jesus?

Read: Acts 1:1-8, 4:13-20

- What does it mean that we are to be Jesus’ witnesses? What does it mean to be a witness?
- How impacting was the disciples stories to the world of the religious leaders? What did they notice about these men who are speaking about Jesus?

Discussion:

- Do you think that everyone who is following Christ has a story of how God has changed his/her life? Explain.
- How confident are you that God has changed your life or done a significant work in your life?

Exercise: What is your story?

We all have a continuing story of how God has changed and is changing our lives. To follow Christ is to be ready to share that story with others as God allows. What’s your story? Share your story with one another:

- What was your life before knowing Jesus Christ?
- How did you come to a place where you received Jesus into your life?

- How is your life different with Jesus in your life?
- How does following Jesus impact your life everyday?

What can I do with my story:

After you have both shared your stories the best you can, answer the following questions to help debrief and learn from this exercise:

- What is something you appreciate in the other person's story?
- What about his/her story do you find yourself wanting to know more about? Explain.
- How might someone be helped/encouraged in following Christ through this person's story?
- Who is someone that might benefit from hearing your story? How would your story help him/her?

Encouraged Response

A few responses that might make sense for a person:

- **Schedule a time to share your story at youth group** - A desire to share his/her story with other people or the youth group might be a great response to this discussion...this is a good idea! If he/she is interested, please contact Mathias to schedule a time to share.
- **Share with a friend** – Look for a way to share your story of transformation with a friend. It might be wise to close your discussion time in prayer for that opportunity.
- **Getting baptized.** A big part of baptism is a person speaking about what God has done in his/her life. If your mentee hasn't been baptized, then this is a great first place to share his/her story.

Evidence of Integration

The goal of these discussions is not to get information across as much as helping someone integrate this into their lives and see students share their stories with others. Here are a few things to look for in your first and future discussions with this person:

- An eagerness to tell others about what God has done in his/her life
- A desire to get baptized
- More confidence in sharing the gospel that you don't have to have all the answers, just able to talk about what God has done.