

I MET JESUS

I ONCE WAS NOW I AM

Tell My Story

A Compassionate Storyteller Tool

"If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way." 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)

Your Story in Three Parts:

Your story of faith is one of the central ways that people will see that Jesus can truly save a life. No matter how or when you became a Christian, you need to know your story and be able to share it compassionately with people in your life who are exploring faith. When Jesus healed the blind man in John 9, the man was confronted with a lot of questions from the Pharisees. He responds with a simple but convincing elevator speech version of his story: "I don't know much else, but I do know this: I once was blind, but now I see." We've used this simple confession to create the framework for a tool to help you organize your story. Remember, the main thing a person wants to know is, "Does Jesus Christ make a difference in a human life? Can a person truly be changed through a relationship with God?" That's what your story needs to answer. Use the following questions to come up with some adjectives:

I. I ONCE WAS (My life before Christ)

- What about my life before Christ will relate most to the non-Christians I know?
- What did my life revolve around? Where did I get my security, identity, or happiness from?
- How did those things begin to let me down?
- If you came to faith at an early age, ask yourself, "What is the great difference Jesus is making in my life?"

I. I MET JESUS (My salvation experience)

- When was the first time I heard the gospel? What were my initial reactions? How did I respond?
- When and why did my perspective of Christ begin to change?
- What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I surrendered to Him?
- Why did I finally decide to give Him complete control of my life?

I. NOW I AM (My life after coming to Christ)

- How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude, and perspective on life.
- What motivates me now? What do I live for?
- Even though my life isn't perfect, how does knowing Christ help me deal with that?

Tips on Preparing and Telling a Compelling Story:

- Keep it simple: Don't make the mistake of thinking that you must prove the Bible or create a brilliant intellectual argument to impress people. Your elevator speech should be no more than 4-6 sentences.
- Keep it current: It can include some details of the past, but people need to know how Jesus is changing you right now. If you say, "I accepted Jesus when I was six at a puppet show, and the rest is history," that may be true, but it's not compelling to a grown adult. Keep it current – what is Jesus up to right now?
- Keep it focused on Jesus: In 1 Cor. 2:2, Paul says, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus." Jesus is alive. He is not a formula, outline, or theological system. He is a person you have a relationship with. Sharing your story is just like introducing one friend to another. Jesus is the great leveler because we all need a savior.
- Keep it free from confusing terms: Christians have developed a confusing language of clichés and phrases that others don't understand. "Have you found Jesus?" – they're like, well, I didn't know he was lost. Or "Have you asked Jesus into your heart?" – I'm not sure he'd fit in there. Or, "I want you to hear my testimony, guard your heart, have your quiet time, I don't feel led, give me a hedge of protection, pray the sinner's prayer. Everything happens for a reason." Avoid including these and other Christian clichés in your story.

Some Samples

- "Before Christ, I just had this plaguing sense of aloneness. I came out of a broken family. I felt alone and isolated. I met Christ while visiting a church that was unlike any church I had experienced growing up. I found a God who has adopted me into his family, and I feel like I'm his child now."
- "My whole life up to the point where I met Christ was slowly self-destructing. I was caught in a downward spiral of self-destructive behavior. Then, I met Christ. A friend had the courage to intervene and pointed me to faith in Jesus. And He gave me the power to begin to live a healthy and constructive life."
- CEO and author Bob Buford said it this way: "I was a bored rich guy. I met Christ. And He's moving me from success to significance. I'm discovering a purpose for my life in my relationship with Christ."