

Sharing Our Testimonies: The Power of Story in Your Ministry

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By Jamie Turco
Director of Communications, Man in the Mirror
Casselberry, Florida

At the church I attend, we have special weekends throughout the year that I look forward to—Easter egg hunts for our kids to enjoy, the fall picnic, Good Friday services, and Christmas Eve, to name a few.

But my favorite Sundays of the year are Baptism Sundays, those mornings when we baptize new believers. Not only does it fill me with joy to watch them take that step, but prior to the baptism, they share their stories that have led them to this point. These stories resonate with me long after their tellers emerge from the water.

One man who was baptized many months ago shared through video that when his family suffered the tragic, sudden death of their son, it was a neighbor they didn't yet know (our worship leader) who rallied around them, and he brought a community with him. That was the start of a spiritual journey, marked by both heartbreak and beauty, toward Christ and His church.

When that man—a father, a husband, and now a volunteer serving in our church—declared through baptism that He is alive in Christ, the emotions I experienced have stayed with me since and will for years. My faith itself was enlarged that day, and my passion refreshed.

How is that possible? American-Russian writer Vera Nazarian says this: “The world is shaped by two things—stories told and the memories they leave behind.”

If you’re a men’s or small group leader, you want guys to experience deep faith and [authentic relationships](#). Giving them the opportunity to tell their stories is one of the most powerful practices your ministry can implement. Why? Sharing our testimonies connects us in three ways...

Story connects us to *each other*.

“Storytellers broaden our minds: engage, provoke, inspire, and ultimately, connect us.”

– Actor and Director Robert Redford

When we share our experiences, we at once seem more familiar—more recognizable—to one another. We discover commonalities that we didn’t know existed, whether it’s an interest, an inside joke, a similar upbringing, a source of suffering, or an emotional response.

A small group I was a part of years ago decided after meeting for six months that we would take turns sharing our testimonies each week for 15 minutes. Sometimes we went longer than 15 minutes. But by the end of that process, we had a much deeper understanding of one another and connection to each other.

We listened to each other carefully, laughed together, and at times cried together. [No number of weeks studying the book of James could have brought about that same result in our relationships](#). It was the power of sharing our testimonies.

Encourage guys who have already developed a level of trust in existing Sunday School classes, small groups, or one-on-one meetups to share their stories in this way—it could be the five-minute version or the twenty-minute version. If one in a group setting, have the leader share first to give an example of format—but also of vulnerability.

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Story connects us to *possibility*.

**“Story is a yearning meeting an obstacle.”
– Fiction Writer Robert Olen Butler**

There isn't a person you passed by today that isn't going through something. It may be a child's illness, a destructive habit, a marriage in crisis, money troubles, loneliness, grief, aging parents, conflict with a friend—the list is endless.

When someone shares their story about what Christ has done and is doing in their lives, it can be balm for the listener—applied directly to these painful spots.

For a soul that feels dry, a reminder that God is working is often the water that helps hope spring up from cracked ground.

And for the unbeliever or person wavering in their faith, hearing someone share their real experience with a very real God awakens their spirit to possibility—temporary and eternal. *Perhaps if God can bring this person joy, then He can bring me joy. Or if God's grace was enough for this guy despite all he had done, then maybe I can be free from my sin and shame, too.*

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We all experience yearning, and the obstacles can be many—our own selfishness, negative thinking, the pain of loss, or wounds from a loved one.

But by pointing others, through our stories, to the One who overcomes, we connect them to the possibility of joy, freedom, and a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Story connects us to *a living and active God.*

**“They triumphed over [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...”
– Revelation 12:11a**

In John’s vision in Revelation, when the devil is hurled down, what does it say defeated him? A debate with someone who studied Christian apologetics? A gospel track?

No, it said they triumphed over him through the death of Jesus Christ and the word of their testimony. In other words, their *story*—of which Christ is the hero!

When I listened to that man’s story on Baptism Sunday, I was profoundly moved because through his testimony of tragedy and hope, God was magnified, and the enemy was defeated. [Genesis 50:20](#) comes to mind: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

God works in *us* when we remember—through our stories—what He has done for us. It reminds us that He is living and active, and that the lies of the enemy aren’t true.

But He also works through us in *others* because our stories reveal the same to them.

THE BIG IDEA: Declaring God's goodness and power through sharing our testimonies is an act of worship, for us and for everyone who hears it.

Who can you have meet with in the coming days and weeks to exchange stories?

If you're a leader, consider how you can make this an integral part of your ministry:

- What men's events, gatherings, or meetings do you have coming up where you could include a short testimony?
- How might you teach your men to share their stories in a way that grows the faith and understanding of the hearer?
- Who might be willing to share their story?
- What type of story is it? Is it a story of transformation—of “before Christ” and “after Christ”—or is it a story of God's extraordinary movement in a circumstance or situation?
- Is there a particular audience that needs to hear it?

Once you have identified the who, when, and where, decide on the how. Will it be shared live or on video? If you have the resources, video is typically preferable because it gives you an opportunity to start and stop, prompt the person sharing, make edits, and show it again and again.

Whether it's live or on video, ask open-ended questions *ahead of time* to help them think through how to tell their story in a resonant way. Guide them to include how they felt and what they experienced, as well as the facts of their story. Help them strip away details that don't add anything so that the more meaningful aspects can make a greater impact.

Above all, help them keep the focus not on what they've done, but on what Christ has done. Because ultimately, it's *His* amazing story—of making the lost found and the sick well. We get the privilege of telling it, for His glory.