

My Story in His Story

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His Story

My Story in His Story, Week 1



What story is God writing in the history of the world?

____ Romans 16:25-27 • The Big Gospel Story _____

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

- ❖ The gospel reveals the story of God’s plan for the history of the world.
- ❖ This story is about Jesus Christ and calls all nations to faith in him, producing salvation for those who believe (cf. Rom 1:16) and obedience to God.

___ Genesis 1:1, 26, 31; 2:15-17 • The Good Beginning _____

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” ... ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good... ^{2:15} The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

- ❖ God made human beings like him to rule and care for his good world.
- ❖ Our life in God's good world would only flourish in obedience to God.

___ Romans 1:20-21, 25 • Our Human Problem _____

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness... ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ... ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

- ❖ God made people to know him, and he makes himself known to people through what he has made.
- ❖ Instead of worshiping their Creator, people sinned by worshiping the creation and became separated from God.
- ❖ God judges human sin, leading to our spiritual and eternal death (cf. Rom 6:23).

___ John 1:1-18 • God Came into the World _____

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ...

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

- ❖ Jesus is the eternal Son of God; he is God and was with the Father before the world began; the world was created through him and he gives it life.
- ❖ The eternal Son of God became human so he could make God known to us.

___ Romans 5:6-11 • Christ Died for our Sins _____

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

- ❖ Human beings are powerless to save ourselves, but God loves us and chose to save us from his judgment through Jesus' death in our place.

- ❖ Jesus' death took away our sins (justified) and gave us peace with God (reconciled).

___ 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 • Jesus' Victory _____

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ... ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- ❖ Jesus rose from the dead, and he will come again to raise to life those who belong to him and bring the whole world under his reign.

___ 1 Peter 2:4-12 • A New People _____

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ... ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- ❖ God's plan is not only to save individuals to be isolated but to make us part of a chosen people, in order to declare his praises.

___ Matthew 28:18-20 • Jesus' Ongoing Mission _____

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- ❖ Jesus is still accomplishing God's plan around the world today by making disciples through his disciples.

___ Revelation 21:1-8 • The Good Ending _____

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

- ❖ God's plan comes to completion when he lives with his people in a world made new, without death or sadness.

- ❖ God will distinguish in the end between those who are victorious through faith in Christ (cf. 1 John 5:4) and those who rejected him.

Week 1 Practice:

Telling God's Story

In your own words, write out a short (no more than 5 sentences) but clear summary of the story of God's saving work in the world.

After you've written your summary, share it with another Christian and ask for points you might need to add or clarify. Don't hesitate to mark changes you want to make or write a fresh copy.

My Story

My Story in His Story, week 2



How does my own personal story fit into God's bigger story of redemption?

___ Ephesians 2:1-10 • Brought from Death to Life _____

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh ^m and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- ❖ There was a time in my life when I, like everyone else, was spiritually dead because of sin. By nature (apart from grace), my sin placed me under God's wrath. (vv 1-3; this applies to everyone)

- ❖ God made me alive in Christ because of his great love for me; I was saved by God's grace through my faith in Jesus, not by my good works. (vv 4-5, 9; does this apply to you?)
- ❖ God created me in Christ Jesus to do good works that God prepared for me to do.
- ❖ I look forward to the age to come, when I will be a display of the riches of God's grace.

___ Psalm 139:13-16 • With Me at the Beginning _____

- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
 you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
 your works are wonderful,
 I know that full well.
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
 when I was made in the secret place,
 when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
 all the days ordained for me were written in your book
 before one of them came to be.
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- ❖ Before I ever came to Christ, God knew me and was working in the circumstances of my life (cf. John 1:48).

___ Acts 2:37-38 • My Crucial Decision _____

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

- ❖ To be saved, I had to respond to the gospel message by repenting and trusting in Jesus to forgive my sins, which I expressed by being baptized.

___ Philippians 1:6 • With Me to the End _____

⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- ❖ When I put my faith in Jesus it is only the beginning of a work that God himself will complete.

___ Philippians 2:12-13 • I Am Still Working as God is Working _____

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

- ❖ Because God is the one who works in me, I can intentionally continue to work out the salvation he has given me in Christ.

Week 2 Practice:
Telling My Story

In less than a page, write a story (testimony) from your life about when you came to a deeper understanding of your relationship with God. It *might* be how you first came to trust in Jesus to save you; it might describe a time *after* coming to faith in Jesus when you renewed or deepened your faith. It should at least mention when you came to Jesus, and it should show how your story is ultimately about God and his story.

If you are not sure you've decided to be a follower of Jesus, talk about your journey toward him so far.

Share your testimony with another Christian. Ask them for ideas about how to make your story more relatable or lead more naturally to Jesus.

My Mission Field

My Story in God's Story, Week 3



Who else's story of faith has God made me part of?

___ Matthew 9:35-38 • Jesus Sees a Harvest _____

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

❖ Jesus saw a harvest field because he saw people with compassion.

❖ The first response to seeing your world as Jesus saw it is to pray.

___ Acts 18:5-8 • Who Is "My Group"? _____

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. ⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

- ❖ Paul began preaching to people he already shared a connection with (cf. Matt 10:5-6).
- ❖ He was willing to cross boundaries to find people receptive to the gospel (cf. Acts 10:28; Matt 10:14).

__ Luke 10:5-7 • A Person of Peace

⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' ⁶ If a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don't move from house to house. (CSB)

- ❖ Disciples Jesus sent to share the gospel were to find a person of peace to stay with who would help them in their gospel work.

__ Acts 19:8-10 • The Chain Reaction

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

- ❖ Paul involved new disciples in his outreach ministry to others (cf. Phil 1:5, 27).
- ❖ As a result, the gospel spread rapidly from one city to an entire province.

Week 3 Assignment: Pray and Watch

Whom do you already know, whose salvation you could pray for? List friends, family members, and regular acquaintances whose faith you're unsure about. Place a star by 3 or 4 you want to pray for most regularly. Pray for God to work and watch what he does in those relationships.¹

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¹ The concept of "Pray and Watch" is derived from Neal and Judy Brower, *Discover the Life*, (Egan, MN: Simple Living, 2007).

If you wanted to start new relationships with people who do not follow Jesus, where might you look? Choose places that you would need to spend time or enjoy spending time anyway.

- At work
- School events
- Kids' activities, specifically:
- An exercise program
- Around my neighborhood
- Another hobby, specifically:
- Other:
- Other:

Tell another person who is on your list and where you might look for new relationships. Continue to build and refine these ideas as you discuss and practice using them.

Starting Spiritual Conversations

My Story in God's Story, Week 4



*How can I starting telling others God's story
(without sounding crazy)?*

___ Colossians 4:2-6 • A Matrix for Outreach _____

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- ❖ Before the conversation comes prayer. God is the one who opens doors for the gospel, and he is the one who gives fitting words.
- ❖ The way you act does not take the place of conversation, but it must adorn it.
- ❖ Without compromising the message of scripture, strive to speak with grace, that is with humility and kindness.

___ 1 Peter 3:15-16 • Responding to Hostility _____

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere 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, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

- ❖ Make reverence for Christ so foundational in your heart that it shows.
- ❖ Regard attacks on your faith as opportunities to give a reason for the hope of the gospel.

___ 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 • Not a Bunch of Know-It-Alls _____

¹ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. ² Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. ³ But whoever loves God is known by God.

- ❖ Be less eager to show what you know and more eager to show whom you love.
- ❖ Show that you are ready to learn something from others by asking questions.

___ 2 Corinthians 2:1-5 • Just Jesus _____

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

- ❖ People come to faith not through our wisdom but through God’s power.
- ❖ Keep bringing the conversation back to the center of the gospel: Jesus Christ, especially that he was crucified.

___ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 • Connections Instead of Barriers _____

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

- ❖ Don't build unnecessary barriers by being inflexible about cultural differences.
- ❖ Instead, be curious about different perspectives and listen with a genuine desire to understand the other person's story.
- ❖ Stay rooted in the gospel while you look for ways to connect with others, so that they can find their way to salvation through you.

Week 4 Practice: Conversation Tools

Choose one or two spiritual conversation starters from the list below, modify one, or write your own.² When and where can you see these conversations realistically taking place? How often are you creating these times and places?

- ❖ What challenges are you facing right now?
- ❖ Where do you look for perspective and help with your inner questions, doubts, and struggles?
- ❖ Can I pray about that?
- ❖ Why do you think people do such terrible things sometimes?
- ❖ What do you think is the basic problem of humanity?
- ❖ Do you think God will hold people accountable for the way they live?
- ❖ What have you done with the spiritual side of your life?
- ❖ Sometime, I'd like to hear your story.
- ❖ Do you ever give much thought to spirituality?
- ❖ Where are you on your spiritual journey in life?
- ❖ Have I ever told you the story of how I became interested in Jesus?
- ❖ Who is Jesus to you?

Copy one or two of these down by hand to help you remember it when you need it:

² These questions, as well as much of this study, are derived from David M. Gustafson, *Gospel Witness: Evangelism in Word & Deed* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019).

What answers could you give a person who asks you a difficult question about your faith that you don't know how to answer? Remember, you don't have to know everything. Copy down your preferred responses below.

- ❖ I'm curious what the Bible says about that. Let me look into it and get back to you.
- ❖ What are your thoughts about that? Why do you think that?
- ❖ Well, I'm not sure, but it makes me think of a time I was questioning my faith...
- ❖ That's a really good question. Would you want to look at the Bible with me sometime and see what we learn?
- ❖ Other:

Called to Salvation

My Story in God's Story, Week 5



How can others come to accept God's gospel story?

___ 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 • Pleading with Others to Be Reconciled _____

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- ❖ Asking someone questions and speaking with grace does not mean we are indifferent about their beliefs. We plead with others to be reconciled to God, because we love them, and so does God.

- ❖ Reconciliation accepts healing in a relationship that is broken.

___ Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23 • Few Find Life _____

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. ...

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

- ❖ Eternal life is not something we can take for granted.
- ❖ Jesus teaches that eternal life must be found and entered into through the “gate” (cf. John 10:9).
- ❖ Many who superficially call Jesus “Lord” will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
- ❖ Salvation comes through a relationship with Jesus and can be seen through the fruit of obedience.

___ Acts 2:37-41 • Call for a Response _____

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

- ❖ Hearing the gospel message must always lead to a response.
- ❖ All who come to God must confess and turn away from their sins (repent) and profess their faith in Jesus’ power to forgive their sins (be baptized).

___ Acts 2:42-47 • Invitation to a New Way of Life _____

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- ❖ Those who come to salvation begin a new way of life, including
 - devotion to scripture (the apostles' teaching),
 - intentional faith-building time with other Christians (fellowship),
 - casual life-sharing time with other Christians (breaking bread),
 - ongoing conversation with God (prayer),
 - giving to others' needs,
 - praising God,
 - and participation in God's saving work in others.

Week 5 Practice: Extending an Invitation

It may be a sudden opportunity with a stranger God brings into your life. It may be that moment that arises after years of prayer and conversations with a loved one. But sooner or later, our prayer is that God will open the door (Col 4:3) to offer an invitation to follow Jesus and receive eternal life. It's nerve-wracking and dangerous to put all our eggs in that one basket; there can be many more conversations between the invitation and the decision to follow Jesus, and many more conversations after the decision. That said, a clear invitation can be a powerful tool in the process of salvation.

In one paragraph (a minute or less of talking time), write out an invitation to someone (the more specific the person, the more realistic the exercise) asking them to make a decision to follow Jesus. Make sure to include Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, that we are saved by his grace, not our works, but that we must choose to respond with faith, and the new life of following Jesus.

Maybe after taking some time to think about what a person must do to receive eternal life, you realize that you yourself have not received it. If so, this may be the opportunity God has led you to to begin a new life of following Jesus. The prayer on the next page can be your starting point in that new life, but then don't forget to continue walking in that new life from now on. Be sure to tell others about your decision and seek to be baptized if you have not.



A Sinner's Prayer: Confess, Believe, and Follow

God, I want to live my life according to your will. But I know that I've sinned and disobeyed you, not just once but as an ongoing pattern in my life. I confess that there is something in my heart that needs to change, and that I can't make that change on my own. Simply put, I'm a sinner, and there is nothing I can do to earn the forgiveness of my sins.

But I believe that you sent your Son Jesus to die on the cross in my place, to take away my sins by carrying them on himself, so that I can be pure and clean in your sight. I humbly accept that gift and trust no longer in myself but only in his saving death and resurrection. Please forgive my sins by the blood of Jesus that was shed for me.

Today I give you my life, to lead me, change me, and use me as you will. Come into my heart and rule over every part of my life. I declare that Jesus is my Lord and commit my life to follow him. Thank you for your love, your forgiveness, and the new life you've promised to me in Jesus. Amen.³



³ All prayer is about interacting with God. There is nothing magic about merely saying these words that can save a person; the words must express genuine faith in God and rely on him to do his saving work inside of them. Likewise, a prayer of faith can come from your own words. This is one model of confessing our sin, professing our faith in Christ, and declaring our dedication to him.

A Witness Life

My Story in God's Story, Week 6



How can I keep God's story clearly in view as my story unfolds?

___ Acts 1:7-8 • Sent to Be Witnesses _____

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- ❖ Being Christ's followers inherently makes us his witnesses in the world.
- ❖ God sends his people with the power of the Holy Spirit, because he knows it is his power and not ours that can save people.

___ Matthew 13:18-23 • The Sower Is Not in Control _____

¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

- ❖ The one who sows the seed cannot control how it grows (1 Cor 3:5-9).
- ❖ Many, if not, most people will reject the gospel message or quickly lose interest, even if the one sharing it is Jesus himself (cf. John 6:66).

___ Colossians 4:2-6 • Pray and Watch _____

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- ❖ We need to make a commitment to pray for God to open doors and then, expecting that he will answer our prayers, watch to see where he is working.

___ Acts 4:23-24, 31 • A Support Team _____

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ...

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

- ❖ We need a place where we can report to other Christians about our progress and struggles and join together in prayer.

___ Matthew 5:16 • Living as Light _____

¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- ❖ Acts of love and kindness are a way of life for Christians, not just a strategy for conversion; they are, however, a vital part of our testimony to the gospel.
- ❖ Our light will only shine before others if we stay involved in other people's lives.

Week 6 Practice:
Getting Over the Hurdles

What fears do you have about being a witness to God's story? What does scripture say that helps us to lay down those fears?

What guilt do you feel about being a witness to God's story? What does scripture say that helps us lay down that guilt?

If your spiritual conversations with others always seem to get stuck in arguments about secondary issues, what might be some ways to make the conversation more personal and gospel-focused?

List two or three specific ways you could start building habits to remind you over the long run that your story is a part of God's big world-saving gospel story (e.g. in your prayers, small groups, service projects, personal relationships, connecting with missionaries...).