

Communicating Your Relationship with Christ

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Central Truth:

A relationship with Jesus Christ is not a private possession. Instead, we are called to share with others the Gospel of Christ and what God has done in our lives so that they may know the power of God in salvation.

INTRODUCTION:

In an ever-increasing relativistic society, the voices of culture have communicated that issues of faith and religion are private matters. Although there must be respect to the sensitivities individuals may hold regarding issues of faith, the follower of Christ is commanded to share the truth of God's love and salvation with others—not out of militant forcefulness, arrogance, or coercion, but through gentleness and love in lifestyle. As a follower of Christ, you are a witness to the greatest transformations a human can know—a mere sinner transformed into a child of the living God. That is news worth sharing with your life, your love, and your words.

1 COMMUNICATING CHRIST

What are some initial impressions or presuppositions you have regarding communicating your faith to others (or witnessing)?

How does the outside world seem to view Christians communicating their faith?

The truth is, most Christians are petrified of sharing their faith with others and the outside world looks down upon Christians for even attempting to do so. Much of this, however, is due to a lack of understanding on the matter by Christians, and bad experiences from the outside world.

By what power will you share Christ?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:4-5.

According to the Apostle Paul, from where does the power come to share your faith?

Our heavenly Father asks no more of us than this: that we obey His command to "Go, and preach the gospel to every creature..." His command is not to "convert everyone." Jesus did not, and neither can we. But we can obey; we can spread the message to all who will listen and trust God for the results. The ministry of Jesus Christ modeled for us a liberating truth about our witnessing efforts: Success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God. *

—Bill Bright

It is easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged when seeking to share your faith in Christ with others—especially when the message is not welcomed or quickly written off. The key to remember is that *you* cannot personally change anyone's mind regarding Jesus Christ. The same power that changed your heart changes the hearts of others. Your calling is to faithfully share what God has done in you. It is *His* power that changes lives.

From Scripture, there are several means through which the Christian is commanded to communicate faith in Jesus Christ...

Communicating Christ through Lifestyle

Read Matthew 5:16.

According to Jesus, what is the correlation between your lifestyle and communicating your faith?

Communicating Christ through Love

Read John 13:34-35.

What does Jesus give as the most distinguishing mark of followers of Him?

There is so much discussion today within the Church of how to be relevant to the world. Although these discussions can be helpful, often what is missed is the height of relevancy Jesus Christ Himself gives us: love for other Christians!

Why is love *for* other Christians *by* Christians so relevant to the world?

Communicating Christ through Words

Read 1 Peter 3:15, Acts 4:19-20, and John 9:25.

As a follower of Christ, what are you commanded to be ready for at any moment according to the Apostle Peter?

How do the other two accounts illustrate this command?

SUMMARY: As a follower of Christ, you are commanded to communicate your faith in Christ every moment of every day through your lifestyle, your love, and your words. Since witnessing is basically communicating Christ, you are consistently communicating something (positively or negatively) to the world through your lifestyle, your love, and your words. The question you must answer is this: "What am I communicating?"

You are writing a gospel each day, by the deeds that you do and the words that you say. Men read what you write—distorted or true; What is the gospel according to you?
—Anonymous

2 COMMUNICATING YOUR TESTIMONY IN CHRIST

In communicating your faith in Christ with words, one of the most notable things to share with others is your personal testimony in Christ.

Read Acts 26:1-23

This passage accounts the personal testimony of one of the most noted Christians in all of history—the Apostle Paul. From this account, you see several important elements to keep in mind as you communicate your own personal testimony...

What is a Testimony?

A testimony is an authenticating evidence or the act of witnessing.* For example, at the scene of an automobile accident, there are authenticating testimonies from witnesses who watched the accident unfold with their own eyes. In the same way, when a follower of Jesus Christ gives a testimony of what God has done in their life, they are illustrating for others what God has done in their life and can do for others.

Your Life BEFORE FOLLOWING CHRIST (26:1-11)

****The personal element. (vv. 1-4)***

What personal gestures does Paul invoke as he begins sharing?

What do we learn about him just as a person?

In communicating your testimony to others, it is essential to remember common courtesy to others. You also learn from Paul that it is important to communicate components of your personal life that may be points of contact with those to whom you are speaking (he is speaking to people well-versed in Jewish affairs).

****The spiritual element. (v. 5-11)***

What glimpses do you see into Paul's spiritual life before he followed Christ? What ideas did he hold about God and religion? What things did he try to do to earn God's favor? (For further reading on this, read Philippians 3:4-6)

Not only do you want to make points of contact with folks from your personal life before coming to faith in Christ, but it is also important to share with them your spiritual background—including the attempts of earning God's favor or performing religious service without an understanding of Christ.

Your Life COMING TO CHRIST (26:12-18)

****The circumstances. (vv. 12-14)***

According to his own account, what were the circumstances that brought Paul to a decision to follow Christ with his life?

****The Gospel invitation. (vv. 15-18)***

What does Jesus commission him to do?

In describing to others the events that led you to follow Jesus Christ, it is important to communicate the circumstances of your life at the time as well as the tenets of the Gospel (repentance of sin, confession of Christ as Lord, and trusting in His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins).

Your Life SINCE FOLLOWING CHRIST (26:19-23)

Describe some of the events of Paul's life that he chronicles here in his testimony since coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

When sharing with others your testimony in Jesus Christ, describing His activity in your life since becoming a follower of Him is just as important as explaining the events that led you to Him.

Read Acts 26:24-29

What response does Paul receive from the authorities?

How does Paul respond?

What does this tell you in regards to communicating your testimony, the response of those to whom you share, and the way in which you carry yourself in communicating?

When communicating your testimony to others, remember the basic outline of the Apostle Paul. Share insights from your life—both personal and spiritual—before you heard about Jesus Christ. Then, explain the events that led you to understand God’s purposes for you in Jesus Christ while also communicating the tenets of the Gospel message. Lastly, remember to share what God has done in your life since making the decision to follow Christ.

3 THINGS TO CONSIDER

When seeking to communicate your testimony in Jesus Christ, here are some helpful things to consider...

- Keep it Christ-centered rather than me-centered. Remember that a testimony points to what Jesus Christ has done in your life and not what you have done yourself.
- Make life connections with people without trying to identify with every single thing in their lives. It is okay to say, “I don’t understand”.
- Be honest about your life without emotionally “vomiting” on people. Be transparent without overwhelming them with every single detail.
- Keep the Hollywood factor for the movies! Don’t glamorize your story. Remember that God’s grace is just as crucial in the life of the moral church kid as it is to the renegade.
- Don’t paint an inaccurate portrait. Things are not always perfect after becoming a Christian. The key, though, is that God’s grace is sufficient for our every need.

NEXT TIME...

“Growing in the Body of Christ”—Growing as a follower of Jesus Christ is not an isolated venture. We are called to be intricately connected to the Body of Christ—His Church.