

The Great Giveaway

A course in promoting the gospel

06 Telling your story

DISCUSSION STARTER

- Think of one episode in your life that was embarrassing, funny, sad, interesting etc. Ask two or three people to tell their story to the group.

INTRODUCTION

Underlying the ‘gospel bites’ method was the idea that we must all be ready to answer the questions or criticisms of our unbelieving friends, neighbours, colleagues etc. One other way you might give an ‘answer’ is to tell your Christian ‘story’, i.e. how you became a follower of Jesus and what difference that makes to your life now.¹

- Refer to the section on p. 19 of *The Great Giveaway* entitled ‘Three kinds of stories’. Lead people through each of these and ask them to identify which of the three categories they fit into.
- What are the advantages of telling your ‘story’? (Refer to ‘Why tell your story’ on pp. 19-20 of *The Great Giveaway* and add any other things you think of)
- In what day-to-day circumstances might you get a chance to tell your story? (A friend might ask you; a colleague might make a critical statement about how Christians live – that give you a chance to tell things from your point of view as a Christian etc.)

GETTING YOUR ‘STORY’ STRAIGHT

- What are the essential ingredients you should include in the telling of your Christian ‘story’? (Refer to ‘What makes a good story of faith?’ on pp. 20-21 of *The Great Giveaway*)

¹ In the New Testament, the word ‘testimony’ usually refers to an official declaration about Jesus and his resurrection (usually by someone who witnessed the events), not the speaker’s Christian life. For this reason, a story of personal faith will (in this course) be called simply your ‘story’, not your ‘testimony’.

Paul, the Apostle, tells his 'story' a number of times in his letters. Look up the following references:

1 Tim. 1:12-17	mercy/grace of God; patience
Phil. 3:4-11	achievements of life don't compare to knowing Christ
Gal. 1:11-16	election, calling, grace, revelation
1 Cor 15:8-10	grace that leads to transformation
2 Cor. 11:22-29	Paul's suffering for Christ

- What themes or ideas does Paul particularly highlight in the telling of his story? How can Paul help us as we get our 'stories' straight? (God's grace, i.e. his undeserved & extravagant kindness, is particularly important)
- What things should you avoid in the telling of your story? (Refer to 'Things to avoid' on p. 20 of The Great Giveaway)
- What factors will dictate how much of your story to tell? (The relationship you have with the person you're speaking too; the time available; the degree of interest in the person you're talking to) Implication: be prepared to give both a longer and a 'bite-sized' version of your 'story')

Important: If it hasn't already come up, emphasise the importance of talking about what it means to follow Jesus now. Telling our story isn't only about our history; it's also about our present relationship with Jesus.

GETTING TO WORK ON YOUR 'STORY'

- Turn to the blank 'This is your life' page. Note down in rough order everything you can think of that contributed significantly to your present faith in Jesus.
- Now select the three or four most important points on the timeline and make brief notes about how these points *particularly* relate to your 'story'.
- Re-read 1 Tim. 1:12-17. Finish in prayer, thanking God for the grace he has shown each of us.

Homework

- Find the time (perhaps in a couple of quiet times) to write out your 'story' in full. Read over it, make changes where necessary, and then read it to someone.

Next week we're all going to share our 'stories'. You can refer to notes if you wish but the idea will be to practise telling your story as naturally as possible.