

SESSION FOUR

SHARE



In this session, we want to talk about being ready for the inevitable “Why are you doing this?” question that will come up when we are genuinely interested in other people. Even if we are reaching out in imperfect ways, the impact of authentic love is so counter to the normal experiences of most people that they are intrigued. So they may open the door with a question.

On the other hand, it may be that people appreciate our kindness, but never ask why we do what we do. They may just assume that we’re “nice.” So at some point, God asks us to be bold, and to initiate the conversation. This can be a bit scary. We certainly don’t want to alienate people or push them away from God! And truth be told, we don’t want them to think we’re strange. But because Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and the only way to the Father, then we need to help people understand that.

We can share the Gospel in a relevant way when we simply tell our own story. We don’t have to be Bible experts or have answers to all of the hard theological questions. We just need to be ready to share our own experiences, and to state clearly and simply how Jesus has changed our lives.



MEMORY VERSE

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.

1 Peter 3:15



HANGING OUT

Open your group with prayer. Be willing to be real and honest. Remind the group to respect confidentiality; commit to keeping prayer requests and current needs within the group.

1. What opportunity or opportunities did God give you to SERVE others this last week?
2. Who is the first person you call or text when you want to share good news? Why?
3. What's the weirdest thing someone has shared with you lately?



WATCH AND LEARN



Watch the DVD teaching for this session, using this **Teaching Notes** section to fill in the blanks, and record key thoughts, questions, and statements you want to remember or look into further.

SHARE

Because at some point - _____ HAVE TO BE A PART OF THE MISSION.

Always be _____ to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the _____ that you have. 1 Peter 3:15

You have a story: a _____ story.

What's the best way to get into telling your story? One way is to _____ for _____ that Jesus has helped you with.

You can also just sort of relate to a _____ .

Friends don't keep _____ from other friends.

FIGURING IT OUT



*If time is short, the questions marked with an * should be given priority.*

1. Who explained the Good News about Jesus to you? How did they do it? What was your initial response?

2. What do you think keeps people from talking about Jesus or sharing the Gospel?

3. * Our memory verse for this session is 1 Peter 3:15. "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."

Are you living a life that motivates people to ask about the hope that is in you?

FIGURING IT OUT

4. Have you ever been asked to give a reason for the hope people see in you?

5. * **Read John 9:25.** When the blind man was asked a question that he didn't know how to answer, he simply said, "I don't know." How does it relieve your fears to hear that "I don't know" is an acceptable way to answer a question about God?

6. * Colossians 4:5-6 says, "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

In order for your conversation to be full of grace, you must be able to listen. How will listening well empower you to share the Gospel more effectively?

LIVING IT OUT

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY THE WISDOM YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE TEACHING AND BIBLE STUDY. THEN THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

Each of us is automatically an expert on our own story, and on our own experiences. But most people aren't necessarily ready to hear the "epic" version of our stories.

What do you think are the most important parts of your story. Include your life before you came to know Jesus, and also how you've changed since He came into your life.



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Pastor Tim challenged each of us to practice our stories. Using the highlights that we identified in the previous question, let's take turns practicing our stories in under two minutes.

Who is one person in your life who seems to be curious about spiritual matters? Spend a little time praying for that person, and for the opportunity to share the two minute version of your story sometime in the near future.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

If you feel God nudging you to go deeper, take some time between now and our next meeting to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own, jotting your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. A great way to gain insight on a passage is to read it in several different translations. You may want to use a Bible app or website to compare translations.

DIGGING DEEPER

READ ACTS 25:23—26:32

The account of Paul's appearance before King Agrippa provides a great example of how to give an account of God's work in your life. You may never get the chance to speak to a president or influential leader, but you can trust God to give you a chance to tell your story to many people along the way. If He opens the door, are you willing to tell your story?

1. How much of Paul's story was BC (before Christ) and how much AC (after Christ)?

2. In what ways did both Festus and Agrippa demonstrate possible responses to your story?

3. Why is it important, as in this case, to realize that you may not ever find out the results of telling your own story?

4. As you think about Paul's setting and his story, what other conclusions do you draw that affect your view of God's prompting in your life?



DAILY QUIET TIME


Each day, read the daily verses and give prayerful consideration to what you learn about God, His Spirit, and His place in your life. Then record your thoughts, insights, or prayers on the lines below each verse.

DAY 1: “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

What does it mean to seek God, and how should that affect our willingness to share with fellow travelers in life?

DAY 2: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

How can you incorporate this verse into your story? Try writing out your faith story (Before Christ, Meeting Christ, After Christ) and put this verse into your narrative.



DAY 3: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Can you think of two or three friends or acquaintances who don't know this truth? How could you begin to share with them? Spend some time praying about that.

DAY 4: "'Listen and I'll tell you what God has done for me" (Psalm 66:16, NCV).

Based on your story, what would you say to someone if he or she wanted what you have in Christ? What has God done for you?

DAY 5: "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... (1 Peter 3:15).

What specific words would you use to convey "gentleness and respect" when you share your story? What words would you avoid? (What Christian jargon can you weed out of your faith story?)
