

*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,

GRACE IN  
ACTION

*My Story  
Workbook*

- Gospel Conversations Training, 6/30 & 7/21
- Alpha Interest Meeting, 7/2
- Story Training, 8/3
- Video Recording Dates, 8/10, 8/17 and 8/24
- Safar Discipleship Demo, 8/25



Dear Grace family,

Thank you for participating in our community discipleship journey known as Grace In Action: The Good News. As we are committed to growing in Christ, we are committed to being his witness and sharing the good news. This booklet is designed as a slow process.

Take your time on this.

No need to rush, just bring this into your daily devotional time. The booklet starts with prayer, a bible study and then some journaling questions. Only then, do we turn to our story. Discover the story God is writing with your life. He will bring to mind and he will shape your testimony. No need to force it, God will bring himself glory as you work through the process. Rest assure that he wants to bear fruit in your faithfulness. I look forward to seeing the recordings in September.

At your service,

*Ryan T. Zeulner*  
MISSION PASTOR

## **THE VALUE OF YOUR LIFE STORY**

- It is unique! There are no others just like it.
- It is personal and easy to understand.
- You are the authority on it. It's difficult to argue with.
- People love to hear personal stories, and remember them.
- People can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge.
- In our postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness.

*Dear God,*

*Your word says that the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is your image. May we not boast or be about ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. For it is you who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," and made your light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Embolden us to come alongside you and help others do what you have done in us.*

*Amen.*

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:4-6**



**INTRODUCTION LETTER**

**PRAYER FOR THE LOST**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PSALM 107**

**JOURNAL QUESTIONS**

**BIBLICAL FOUNDATION**

**THEMES**

**FOUR PARTS OF A LIFE STORY**

**ROUGH DRAFT**

**SUGGESTIONS**

**CONSIDER DELIVERY**

**WORK IT OUT IN COMMUNITY (8/3)**

**SECOND DRAFT/ FINAL (TYPED)**

**PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO WILL HEAR**

## **INDUCTIVE STUDY TIPS:**

### ***1. Observation: What does this passage say?***

- Circle repeated words and phrases.
- Underline the promises.
- Draw a box around any commands.
- Mark every reference to God with a triangle.
- Is there cause and effect (e.g., words like therefore, because, so that, etc.)?

### ***2. Reflection: What is God telling me?***

- What area in my life needs repentance?
- What words in this passage encourage and strengthen me?

### ***3. Application: What is my response?***

- Journal any thoughts you may have and conclude with prayer.



## PSALM 107

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—  
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,  
3 those he gathered from the lands,  
from east and west, from north and south.
- 4 Some wandered in desert wastelands,  
finding no way to a city where they could settle.  
5 They were hungry and thirsty,  
and their lives ebbed away.
- 6 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.  
7 He led them by a straight way  
to a city where they could settle.
- 8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,  
9 for he satisfies the thirsty  
and fills the hungry with good things.

10 Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness,  
prisoners suffering in iron chains,  
11 because they rebelled against God's commands  
and despised the plans of the Most High.  
12 So he subjected them to bitter labor;  
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.  
13 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.  
14 He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness,  
and broke away their chains.  
15 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,  
16 for he breaks down gates of bronze  
and cuts through bars of iron.

17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways  
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.  
18 They loathed all food  
and drew near the gates of death.  
19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.  
20 He sent out his word and healed them;  
he rescued them from the grave.  
21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.  
22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings  
and tell of his works with songs of joy.





23 Some went out on the sea in ships;  
they were merchants on the mighty waters.  
24 They saw the works of the Lord,  
his wonderful deeds in the deep.  
25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest  
that lifted high the waves.  
26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;  
in their peril their courage melted away.  
27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards;  
they were at their wits' end.  
28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he brought them out of their distress.  
29 He stilled the storm to a whisper;  
the waves of the sea were hushed.  
30 They were glad when it grew calm,  
and he guided them to their desired haven.  
31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.  
32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people  
and praise him in the council of the elders.

33 He turned rivers into a desert,  
    flowing springs into thirsty ground,  
34 and fruitful land into a salt waste,  
    because of the wickedness of those who lived there.  
35 He turned the desert into pools of water  
    and the parched ground into flowing springs;  
36 there he brought the hungry to live,  
    and they founded a city where they could settle.  
37 They sowed fields and planted vineyards  
    that yielded a fruitful harvest;  
38 he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased,  
    and he did not let their herds diminish.

39 Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled  
    by oppression, calamity and sorrow;  
40 he who pours contempt on nobles  
    made them wander in a trackless waste.  
41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction  
    and increased their families like flocks.  
42 The upright see and rejoice,  
    but all the wicked shut their mouths.

**43     *Let the one who is wise heed these things  
        and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.***



## **JOURNAL**

Throughout the New Testament we see followers of the Way of Jesus bearing witness to the work of God in the world in both words and actions. We have the accounts of Jesus and the early Church to inform, encourage, and guide our own journey as witnesses of Christ. When we can pause and remember who God is and how Christ and the Holy Spirit have been at work in our lives, we can participate in the ongoing work of the Church to be witnesses throughout the globe.

These reflection questions are designed to help you remember your walk with Jesus and the impact it is having on the world around you. Take a few minutes each week to journal through your own story in remembrance of who Jesus is.


***When was the first time you remember being aware of God's love for you? Where were you? What was happening in your life?***

***How did it feel to experience the presence of God with you at that moment?***

***What happened after that encounter?***

***Was there a particular moment you committed your life to Christ? What was happening in you in that moment? What were the circumstances that led to that moment?***

***What happened after that moment? Did anything change in you? If so, what? Did anything change around you or in your circumstances? If so, what changed?***




***When you look back at your journey with Jesus, what moments are significant? What do you think was being formed in you in those moments? Is there any impact on your relationships and community that stems from those moments?***

***How would you complete these sentences:***

I witnessed God's faithfulness when...

Jesus transformed my life by...

The Holy Spirit guided me to...



***How have you witnessed the resurrection power of Christ in your life? In the communities you have been a part of?***


***What doubts have driven you to wrestle with the Lord?  
What truths or insights have emerged in those seasons?***

***If you could only give one answer to this statement: "I follow Jesus because..." what would it be?***

***Complete this statement:*** God showed up for me when...

***Complete this statement:*** I want others to know Christ because...





*Your personal story (testimony) can be one of the most persuasive forms of communication.*

**The Bible is full of life stories:**

*David* "Come and listen, and I will tell you what God has done for me." Ps 66:16

*Woman At The Well* "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him [Jesus] because of the woman's testimony." John 4:39

*Man Born Bline* "I don't know whether He [Jesus] is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!"

*Peter And John* "We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20

*Paul* On six different occasions (Acts 22-26) Paul used his life story to share the Good News with unbelievers.

## **We are commanded to share our life stories**

"Let the whole world know what He has done for you"

*Ps 105:16*

"Every day tell how He saves us. Tell the nations of His glory; tell all peoples the miracles He does"

*Ps 96:2-3*

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

*I Peter 3:15*

" 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."

*Acts 1:8*

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God allows experiences in my life so I can relate to others who need Christ!

Your life story can serve as a bridge between someone's felt needs and his or her real need – the need for salvation in Jesus Christ.

Your life story can be shared before or after sharing the Gospel.

There will be times where someone is not interested in hearing you explain the Gospel, but will want to hear your story.

Sharing our faith allows others to know and understand us and God better.

Listen to someone else's story. Get to know them.



## POSSIBLE LIFE STORY THEMES

*How Trusting Jesus has helped me deal with my...*

worries/anxiety  
guilt/shame  
anger/temper  
emptiness/lack of purpose  
grief  
stress/burnout  
low self-esteem  
poor health  
disappointment  
insecurity  
regrets  
discontent-always busy  
fears  
loneliness  
addictions/habits  
self-centeredness  
despair/depression  
cheap thrills  
boredom with life  
fear of death  
"something was missing"  
bitterness and resentment  
pain of rejection  
problems with parents/family

*How Trusting Jesus has given me a new...*

inner peace  
forgiveness/fresh start  
patience and love  
purpose in life/meaning  
comfort and joy  
new energy and a power of living  
significance. I am valuable to God  
strength to go on  
trust in His good plans  
confidence and a sense of security  
a second change at life  
contentment and peace  
faith to face my fears  
He's always with me/church family  
power to change  
love for other people  
hope  
real, lasting happiness  
adventure with God  
assurance of heaven  
sense of fulfillment  
ability to break free from my past  
God's unconditional love  
positive changes **with**

Brainstorm some possible life story themes...

*Before moving on, stare at a clock for a full minute to grasp how long 60s seconds is  
and repeat many times as necessary.*



## **CRAFTING YOUR LIFE STORY**

### **IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN RECENTLY / HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE:**

#### *The Four Parts of Your Life Story*

##### **1. *What was my life like before I met Christ?***

- What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
- What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
- What was most important to you? i.e. What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life? (sports, grades, relationship, partying, having fun, popularity, entertainment, etc).

##### **2. *How I realized I need Christ?***

- What significant steps led up to your conversion?
- What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?
- How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

##### **3. *How I committed my life to Christ.***

- What specifically did you do?
- How did it happen? How does a person commit his life to Christ?

##### **4. *The difference it has made in my life?***

- What benefits have you experienced or felt?
- What problems have been resolved?
- How has Jesus helped you change for the better?
- How has your relationship with Jesus Christ helped your relationships with others? Give a current example.

**IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AS A CHILD BUT WALKED AWAY OR NEVER GREW UNTIL A DEEPER RECOMMITMENT LATER IN LIFE:**

Use the same four steps, but start with the time just prior to your recommitment. Give some examples of how you were trying to meet your own needs without Christ, but it wasn't working. Describe what caused you to realize you needed Christ directly in your life and how you fully committed to Him. Then, explain how Jesus is currently meeting the deepest needs in your life.

**IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT AN EARLY AGE AND NEVER STRAYED:**

Use the same four steps with this modification: focus on some deep need or common problem that others experience (see list below). Explain the difference your faith in Christ has made in your life, focusing on this specific issue. Don't say the exact age you became a Christian. Continue with steps 3 and 4.

Can you image life if you haven't found Jesus early? What has he saved you from, even if you have never lived that life.

*The Life Story Pyramid*

Least time on #1  
More time on point 2  
Even more time on point 3  
Spend the most time on your last point



## **LIFE STORY WORKSHEET**

- 1. What was my life like before I met Christ?*
- 2. What led me to realize that I needed Christ?*
- 3. How did I commit my life to Christ?*
- 4. What kind of difference has Jesus made in my life?*
- 5. What theme could I use in sharing my life story?*
- 6. Was there an experience in your life that only God can get the glory?*

## **ROUGH DRAFT OF MY LIFE STORY**

Using all of your journal exercise and booklet insights, spend 10 minutes writing your testimony. You may need another sheet of paper.





## **SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR LIFE STORY**

Pray and ask God to give you the right words.  
Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.

Keep it short and to the point.  
Be succinct. Avoid excessive, unnecessary details.  
Try to keep your testimony below 2 minutes. Goal is 1 minute.

Refer to experiences most people have in common.  
Share a slice of your life (as story) that they will identify with. - Spiritual Appetizer  
Be honest about your continuing struggles. Your life is not perfect.  
Don't imply that all of your problems ended at conversion.

Spend the most time on part 4 – the difference Christ has made.  
Emphasize WHY (the benefits) you received Christ.  
Mention the benefits of being certain of your destiny when you die.

Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-conversion sins.  
Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.  
If you quote Scripture, limit it to one verse.  
Don't mention any denomination.

Give concrete examples of the changes in your life.  
The more specific you are, the more dynamic your story will be.  
Avoid using dates, names, and ages. It doesn't matter to them.

Be prepared. Practice until it feels and sounds natural.  
Read it aloud and edit it to make it sound conversational.  
Let a friend read it and make suggestions.

Speak casually, informally, in a matter-of-fact tone.  
Don't dramatize or embellish your story.  
If you share a mystical experience, own that not everyone has these.

Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."  
Use "I, me, and my" not "you." It's about you – not them.  
Ask "if I had no background in Christianity, would this make sense to me?"

Choose a central theme (see list) and keep this as a focus of your story.  
Don't start by saying "I was raised in a Christian home ..."

Smile.

## CONSIDER DELIVERY

Up until now, you have probably thought of your story in order as it has happened. Now think about your story as a video.

As you set to record, you can tell it out of order. You can tell it as if your testimony was a movie trailer. You can tell it with a catchy opening line - have you ever clicked on an article because of "click bait?"

What would draw in listeners to your story?

***It doesn't have to be linear.***

***It does need to be interesting.***

This doesn't mean exaggerating, or being overly dramatic. It means possibly looking at your story through a different lens in order to bring intrigue.

Starting off with, ***"I was so bad, I made my youth leader quit,"*** is better than, "When I was young, I got in trouble a lot."

***"I was inches from death, when it hit me,"*** is a great starting line as supposed to, "Over time I started drinking too much, until one day..."

Or how is this for a hook, ***"I have gained and lost riches more times than I can count..."***

Rework your story if you feel like you could create intrigue early on.

**Remember:** Being vulnerable in your testimony is your super power! Use it!



## WORKING IT OUT IN COMMUNITY

Share your story with three people. Record their feedback each time.

- What stood out to them as the focus?
- What popped in the story? What didn't pop in the story?
- What would you dial down in order to highlight the focus?

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- What would you dial down in order to highlight the focus?

Rework your testimony, tighten it up and share it with another person for one last evaluation.



Make sure to sign up for a time to get recorded! Come with a printed draft of your story.

## ***SCRIPTURES***

John 3:16

Ephesians 2:4-9


Colossians 1:21-22

Titus 3:4-7

1 John 5:11-13

Romans 10:9-10

John 1:12



Be in prayer for those who will hear your story, both online and as you share it in person. Maybe there is 4-5 people you know that the Lord is calling you to share with?

***Who has God put on your radar?***

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*I will pray for...*

- 1. God to awaken my friend to new life.*
- 2. Specific prayer requests of my friend.*
- 3. My friend to see Jesus through the way I live and speak to them.*
- 4. My faith and love for Jesus to grow.*
- 5. Other Christian's faith and love for Jesus to grow.*
- 6. Opportunities for your friend to hear about Jesus and His love from others.*



3170 Red Hill Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92626