Sharing Your Testimony (Grace Story)

It is important for you to be able to write out your personal grace story (testimony)—not for the purpose of memorizing and sharing it verbatim, but because it helps to put into words some of the important and interesting details of your relationship with Christ.

Think of your life as a journey. It began without God and was not connected to God. At some point you experienced the grace of God that allowed you to be forgiven, accepted and adopted into God's family. Your relationship with him was restored because God showed you grace. This is your opportunity to share that grace story with others so they might be encouraged and possibly even adjust their journey to join with God.

Our individual stories are some of the most powerful discipleship and evangelism tools because they are so deeply unique to us. Please do not think your story has to be like someone else's story – because it isn't! Your environment, culture and faith are all unique to you, as is God's interactions with you. Share YOUR story – and by that we mean to tell the story of how God showed up and became the hero of your life.

The choice of the right words, the flow of your story, and knowing how to begin and end are all important. As you begin to work on this, ask the Lord for wisdom and insight into just how to share your story. The following worksheet is meant to help you outline the significant highlights in your journey with Christ. *You do not need to have an answer for every question*; they are meant to help you process and think through some things. If a question does not seem relevant to you just move on to the next one.

If you get stuck, feel free to reach out to one of the elders.

When you are finished, please type it up and send it to one of the elders for review. We look forward to learning about your grace story!

Know Your Before, During, and After.

What Was Your Life Like Before You Encountered Jesus?

1. Think about each phase of your life: childhood adolescence and adulthood What was your faith like through each of these phases? Jot down a few details.

2. Would you say you had any encounters with God (good or bad) before your you gave your life to Jesus? Describe them. How did these influence your understanding of God?

3. Make a list of the longings and desires that shaped your journey to Christ. What obvious needs did Jesus address? Was it a sense of emptiness, a desire for forgiveness and acceptance, the longing to know God, the need to find significance, or something else? Try your best to describe how you were feeling in terms others might recognize in their lives.

4. Who were the key people or groups who influenced you to follow Jesus? How did they help you move toward Jesus? Can you remember anything specific they said or did to overcome misconceptions, help you see your need for Jesus, or unsettle your thinking? What were the pivotal moments and conversations?

How Did You Meet Jesus?

1. What were the circumstances of your life at the time when your faith became real? Try your best to describe this in terms others might recognize similarly in their lives.

2. Can you identify a specific moment or period when you committed your life to Jesus? Where did that happen? Describe what you felt and experienced and briefly define what you believe it means to accept Jesus.

3. If you were responding to a sermon or a Bible study, what was it about? What were the circumstances of your life that helped that message make sense?

4. How did your encounter with Jesus address the longings, desires, and/or restlessness you experienced prior to conversion? How would you describe the central issue or question of your journey? How did God answer this?

5. What was the role of Christian community in your surrendering to Jesus? How did the people you mentioned above, or perhaps a church, Bible study, or Christian friends influence you and help you understand your need for God?

What Difference Has Following Jesus Made?

1. If you had to tell someone why you are a Christian, what would you say?

2. How does knowing Jesus now compare to your previous (childhood, adolescent) faith?

3. How did/does knowing Jesus address the longings, desires, and restlessness that you identified previously in your life? Is it just beginning to deal with these matters, or have they been completely transformed?

4. How have you been changed by God? These could be subtle or obvious changes.

5. Why do you think others should accept the gift of salvation through Jesus?

Write it Out.

Write Concisely and Conversationally.

Use the space below to shape your notes above into a communicable story. Write no more than 200 words on each phase of your story (before, during, and after), so your total length is 600 words or less. This will be about five minutes long when spoken aloud.

Remember, **YOUR story is a part of the ULTIMATE Story—God's Story**. Even though you are telling your story here, it should end up more focused on God and how Jesus rescued and saved you. You should not end up looking like the hero in this story—God should be the hero!

Story Tips

- Make your story about 3-5 minutes long.
- Don't get "preachy" or "churchy" in your story, but tell your real story.
- Use normal, every-day language to tell your story (avoid "church" words).
- Keep God and Jesus the "main characters" in your story…don't focus on how "bad" you were and all the things you did wrong—make Jesus look awesome in your story!
- Don't try and tell every single truth about God or the Bible in your story.
- Don't worry about what others will think of your story—remember—it's YOUR story, they can't really argue with what has happened in your life.
- After you have written it, share it with a close friend or family member to see if it makes sense to them and edit accordingly.