

TELLING YOUR STORY

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S STORY

Every follower of Jesus has a story to tell, it's a story about God and his grace. However, many of us do not feel equipped to tell our story in such a way that points to Jesus as the hero. Telling our story can be the most natural way to talk to our not-yet-believing friends about Jesus.

Every great story contains four parts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration, because that is the pattern that God's Story follows. God's Story helps us make sense of all other stories. God's Story is the ultimate Good News, the gospel that we find on the pages of the Bible. Understanding the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration pattern in God's Story will help us make sense of our stories, and the broken world in which we find ourselves. Below is a quick summary of these four parts and their themes:

CREATION: ORIGIN AND IDENTITY

We are made in God's image to reflect his glory, to love God, and to love others.

FALL: THE PROBLEM

We have rebelled against God's rule, but our self-rule leads to brokenness, conflict, slavery, and judgment.

REDEMPTION: THE SOLUTION

God rescues humanity and restores his rule by sending his Son and graciously enables us to live under his rule by paying the price of our judgment on the cross.

RESTORATION: HOPE AND TRANSFORMATION

God will recreate this broken world when Jesus returns to fully establish his rule and reign, and to usher in the new heavens and new earth.



A FEW STORY TIPS

- Make your story about 10 minutes long, using normal, everyday language.
- Write out your story. This will help you stay on track, and will ensure you include the most important aspects.
- The Father already knows your story and accepts you fully because of Jesus, so you can be totally honest with others. Don't fear what people might think.
- Practice telling your story with close friends and family so you will be prepared when the opportunity arises.
- Pray and ask the Spirit to speak through you as you tell your story.

REMEMBER, IT'S ACTUALLY HIS STORY!

PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR GOSPEL STORY

Understanding God's Story is essential for properly interpreting the elements in our own story. Though we regularly believe that our stories are about us, our stories are really about God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). He is the main character and the hero, not you. "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever." (Romans 11:36). Think through the four elements of your story, and pray about how each one is an opportunity to point to your need for God and his redemptive work.

CREATION: ORIGIN AND IDENTITY

God's Story begins with him bringing everything into existence. He is the author and all things find their worth in him. And yet, we all have looked to something else to define and give us value.

Key Question: As you begin organizing your story, think about your background, what most shaped your understanding of yourself? What were the sources of your sense of identity?

Other questions to consider:

- Where were you born and what was your family like?
- Talk about your relationships (parents, siblings, or other influences in your life)
- What did you believe about God? What did you believe about the world? What kind of person did you want to be?

FALL: THE PROBLEM

The world we live in is not as it should be. We are not as we should be. Brokenness is all around us.

Key Question: How was your relationship with God and others not the way God created it to be? Why? Remember to talk about specific ways sin has brought about pain in your life.

Other questions to consider:

- What were some of your most painful experiences? How did you respond?
- What was broken in your life? Relationships? Behavior? Attitudes? Health? Who was to blame?
- How did you try to fix the brokenness? Were those efforts effective?

REDEMPTION: THE SOLUTION

Describe how Jesus' life, death and resurrection have brought redemption to your story.

Key Question: How has Jesus redeemed and rescued you through his death on the cross? How did you come to put your faith and trust in Him to save you and restore your life to the way God intended it to be?

Other questions to consider:

- What people or things have failed to rescue you?
- How did the Spirit lead you to put your faith in Jesus? Did he use people, the Bible, a supernatural experience, difficult circumstances, a powerful message?
- What were some of the effects of your belief in Jesus? How did you begin to experience God restoring you back to the way you were originally created?

RESTORATION: HOPE AND TRANSFORMATION

There's a deep longing within each of us for change, for things to be different tomorrow than they are today. What we're craving is the restoration of the brokenness that surrounds us. Because of what Jesus has done, restoration has begun.

Key Question: Conclude your gospel story by talking about what the Spirit is doing in your life now. What has changed and is changing in your life? Who and what is the focus of your life today?

Other questions to consider:

- What are you hoping will change next week, month, year, 10 years?
- Who is the focus of your preferred version of the future?
- What are some specific ways you've seen the Spirit make you more like Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23)?
- Examine restoration in your attitude, behavior, and relationships, and be as specific as you can.