

How to Share Jesus with Others

Lesson 4: Sharing your testimony

In the last lesson, we talked about the many ways we can meet new people and heard real stories of how God moved to open new doors for friendship. We talked about the importance of praying before we go out to make new friends and the power of prayer walks. We discussed the power of being friendly and using greetings or conversations when making new friends. We saw that God also opens doors when we stop and show genuine interest in the lives of others. With our eyes and ears open – fully expecting God to answer our prayers for his glory – God places people right in front of us to engage our curiosity, giving us opportunities for conversation. If we're humble and open, God will even create situations for us to be helpful or useful to others so we can meet them and shine his love and light into their lives. These people are all around us: they're our neighbors, coworkers, doctors, and shopkeepers. They're in our apartment buildings, workplaces, grocery stores, parks, libraries, bookstores, gyms, and coffee shops. We can even volunteer, attend local events regularly, or start an English conversation class to build ongoing relationships. In other words, we don't have to go very far for God to open doors for us to make new friends, and he can use any place we are during the day. The key is that we have to "Go!" and make followers, as Jesus tells us. In other words, we can't stay home all day. Instead, we must leave our homes and be intentional about listening to where the Holy Spirit is leading us as we go about our day.

Since we prayed last week for the Lord to open doors for new friendships with people genuinely seeing God, how did you act in faith over that prayer? Did you spend time praying for friends or go on a prayer walk? Who did the Lord send you? Tell your stories!

Share any other stories of people from Lesson 2 that you met with this week. Who did you show love to among the people you already know but have never shared Jesus with them?

Who should share their testimony?

Our faith has everything to do with whether or not we reach out to meet new people to spread the glory and love of Jesus in our world. If we *believe* that the Lord is going to send us people to impact, then our eyes and ears will be open to how the Spirit is guiding us every day. In the same way, if we've had a genuine encounter with Jesus that has transformed our lives, or we've experienced Jesus through miracles, we will joyfully share those stories with others. Testimonies are simply real stories of how God has worked in our lives and in the lives of others. When speaking with a Pharisee named Nicodemus [nih-ko-DEE-mus] who comes to Jesus at night, Jesus explains the role of testimony in our salvation:

³ "No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.... ⁵ No one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'... ¹¹ We speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?... ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (John 3, NIV)

We can learn many things about sharing our faith from this passage. Now, let's go deeper into what Jesus is saying so that we can follow him more closely:

Jesus says that to simply "see" the kingdom of God, we must be born again. What does it mean to "see" the kingdom of God? What does it mean to be born again? (v. 3, 6)

Jesus says that to "enter" the kingdom of God, we must be born of water and the Spirit. What do you think this means? (v. 5) What's the difference between "seeing" and "entering" the kingdom?

According to Jesus, what's the definition of "testimony," (v. 11). How are testimonies formed? (v. 20-21)

We understand the term "born again" from John 1, where John tells us that those who believe and receive Jesus become children of God: "children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:13). In other words, a person has been born physically, but at some time, they encountered Jesus and put their full faith in his sacrifice and teachings. Now they have a new life as a child of God. The person who has entered the kingdom has been made new by the Spirit of God, has the Spirit of God living in him, and has turned away from their old life of sin through baptism (Romans 6:1-4). If this is true about us, then we are the people who have seen and entered the kingdom of God and can testify that what we have seen and experienced is real and true. If someone has not yet given their lives to Jesus, they too can begin sharing their testimonies! In fact, we often see this when people are just beginning to know him.

Who do we share with?

In John 3, Jesus is revealing this process of how people come into his kingdom. If the person is encountering Jesus, they begin to see or recognize the kingdom of God. Even though they may be trapped in sin or come from a different religion, they have eyes and hearts that are spiritual and are open to the truth: "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (3:6). In their hearts, they already believe that this world is not all there is to life, and they're hungry for something more through God. In the phrase "born again," the word "again" [Gk: anóthen] can also mean "from above"¹ or from heaven. We see Jesus speak about this type of person in John 6 where he says, "44 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.'" In other words, when we see a person responding positively to our testimony and the spiritual things taught by Jesus, we can know that God is drawing this person to himself. The birthing process has just begun! In this way, we can know who the Lord is calling and who to focus on. We can also recognize when a person is not responding, and it's time to find the one God is drawing.

What do you think are some signs of a person who is open to Jesus? What might be some signs that a person is not open?

¹ "509. Anóthen," *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, Electronic Database, 2011, Biblosoft, <https://biblehub.com/greek/509.htm>.

A person who is open to Jesus asks questions and engages in further conversation. They typically will not shut down a spiritual conversation and may even share reasons why they don't believe in Jesus. If we listen to their story and seek to understand their perspective, we may find that they are deeply spiritual but have never met a true follower of Jesus, have never learned about Jesus, or have listened to lies. A person who is not open may argue or continually change the subject when you try to engage in spiritual conversations. Open people will typically move *toward* conversation and friendship. When you meet someone who is not open to Jesus, remember that people can change: Nicodemus did! You can read about him in John 19:38-42. In general, though, we encourage you to focus on the people who are interested in your spiritual life and stories and are open to hearing or learning more about Jesus.

What do we share?

The question then is, what do we share with people? Jesus speaks clearly about this:

¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

(John 3:19-21).

A person with a genuine testimony in Jesus has seen the power of God in their life and the life of others. They have left the world of darkness and have become convinced that Jesus is who he says he is. They've exposed their own sin or false beliefs and are ready to tell the world about it. They're not concerned about what people think about them or whether others will look down on them for their past life, because they fully believe that their story reveals the power of God that can help someone else! Their focus is not on themselves and their own honor before men but on Jesus, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. They can't wait to tell people about how Jesus brought them from death to life to bring him glory and to help others who are seeking God to know the truth so they might be saved too.

In Jesus's own words, a testimony is speaking "of what we know" and testifying "to what we have seen" (John 3:11) so that others can believe. Our salvation testimonies center around how we've come to believe in Jesus. Before we encountered Jesus, where were we in our thoughts, sins, purpose, and lifestyle? Did we come to faith through a realization, miracle, an experience, or a life transformation? How has our life changed since then? How have we grown in our faith because of these types of experiences? Testimonies can also include our spiritual experiences after giving our lives to Jesus. We can share how Jesus has changed our lives as it relates to our sins, our focus in life, our relationships, our families, our hearts, our peace, our physical or mental health, our desires and addictions, our goals and motives, our sadness or pain, and more. Perhaps we coped with stress and anxiety in unhealthy ways, and Jesus showed us how to depend on him instead. Perhaps the people that once influenced or even controlled us changed – our families, societies, friends, schools, coworkers, people in authority, or media. Our testimonies share in real ways how Jesus has changed or impacted these areas of our lives.

Take a minute of silence and write about what your life was like before you put your full faith in Jesus. What problems were you facing? Using the paragraph above, look for other things you can add to your testimony. (If you've never put your full faith in Jesus, then describe your life now and the struggles you're facing.)

How did you discover Jesus? What happened? (If you've never put your full faith in Jesus, then describe what you've been learning about Jesus.)

Why did you become a follower of Jesus? How did Jesus impact you?

What is your life like now? What's changed? (If you've never put your full faith in Jesus, then describe how you think Jesus could change your life or how you want him to change you.)

If you've encountered miracles, take a minute to list a few of those miracles.

Take time to share what you wrote. Try to keep your sharing to five minutes or less if others need a chance to share.

On the Testify page of our website, we house videos and written stories of real people and their encounters with Jesus. Most of the "written" testimonies are from people in the Connect the Nations or TalkEnglish ministries or from people we know personally. You can study these testimonies and consider how to share your own stories, or you can watch them to help you grow in your faith!

This Week:

1. Read or watch a few of the *Salvation* testimonies on the Connect the Nations [Testify](#) page. Study them for ideas on how to share your salvation story. Read or watch other types of testimonies and write more stories about your personal encounters with Jesus.
2. Continue reaching out to the friends you've been meeting or ones you already know. Share with them a personal testimony of how Jesus has touched your life.
3. Continue praying for your friends and reading more about Jesus in the Gospels.