

Think Local: Why Changing the World Begins in Your Backyard – Week Six

Pattern Four: Telling Your Story

Selected Scriptures

Introduction: Peter urges us to always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks us why we have hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). One way to do this is to be ready to tell our faith story. But we need to be wise with this. The biblical pattern is that we tailor our story so that it fits the context and the audience.

1. *THE MANDATE – Be prepared to say something about your faith on a moment’s notice. 1 Peter 3:15*

- A. There are four components to Peter’s command. 3:15a-d
 - 1. Lordship component – Sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart.
 - 2. Preparation component – Be ready to make a defense verbal defense.
 - 3. Relationship component – The assumption is that you’ve built a grace-based relationship.
 - 4. Spiritual component – Do it with gentleness and respect.
- B. There are three main ways to apply this command.
 - 1. Build serving relationships in the secular world through common grace.
 - 2. Build a culture of integrity into your relationships in the secular world.
 - 3. Work on your story.

2. *THE MEANS – Prepare your story so that it can be told in a variety of ways. Paul’s experience in Acts.*

- A. Paul had a specific experience – He comes to Christ on the Damascus road. Acts 9:1-9
 - 1. Paul received authority to go on a persecution mission. 9:1-2
 - 2. Paul was blinded by light and confronted by the resurrected Jesus. 9:3-6
 - 3. Paul was with an entourage who witnessed the event (Deuteronomy 17:6). 9:7
 - 4. Saul was blind for three days. 9:8-9
- B. But throughout Paul’s ministry, he skillfully tailors his story to specific situations.
 - 1. Paul expresses his testimony to Jews in Jerusalem. Acts 22:1-23
 - 2. Paul tells his story in front of Felix. Acts 24:1-25
 - 3. Paul expresses his testimony before Agrippa in Caesarea. Acts 26:1-32
 - 4. Paul tells his story to the Galatians. Gal. 1:11-24
 - 5. Objection – Isn’t this manipulative and deceitful? Luke 16:1-9
- C. You have one story, but when you tell that story there is always a context and an audience.
 - 1. My experience Russia
 - 2. My experience in ministering to men in the “Rum House” in Cuba.
 - 3. My experience in Celebrate Recovery.
 - 4. My experience at OKWU.

3. *THE METHOD – Write out your testimony as an equipping exercise.*

- A. Step one: Get the basic story down on paper and share it with a Christian friend.
 - 1. Most testimonies have a main theme. Identify that theme.
 - 2. Remember the four dynamics of *story*: past, crisis, changes amid crisis, and present.
 - 3. Start by outlining the essential facts.
 - 4. Get something down on paper and edit, about 2,500 words or 10 pages double spaced.
- B. Step two: Identify some variations.
 - 1. Variations are based on who your non-Christian friends are.
 - 2. Variations need to be based on length.
 - 3. Variations need to include anticipated outcome.
 - 4. Variations need to be true.

- C. Step three: Write out the variation based on anticipated needs.
 - 1. Sound bite version.
 - 2. Conversational version.

- D. Objection: Doesn't this take a lot of time?
 - 1. Obedience takes time.
 - 2. There is a leveraged impact to this discipline.