

"Our communication of the gospel depends not on human strategies or well-polished techniques or even brilliantly reasoned arguments but on divine initiative. It is the hidden work of the Holy Spirit that gives our words meaning and power and that produces changed hearts."

—Rebecca Manley Pippert

WITNESS

DESIRE	to reveal the life-changing love of Jesus to others
DEFINITION	To witness means modeling and telling of the difference Jesus has made in one's life.
SCRIPTURE	<p>"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)</p> <p>"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)</p>
PRACTICE INCLUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living in the presence of Christ in a way the world finds compelling and desirable • intentionally engaging in life with people of different beliefs • serving others at points of need and in times of pain • inviting others to investigate the claims of Christ and the community of faith • sharing the good news of Jesus at the appropriate time in the appropriate way • becoming involved with an Alpha course • leading a Bible study or GIG (Group Investigating God) with God seekers • comfortably expressing my Christian journey in words that appropriately connect with others • addressing the fears and sins that harm my witness
GOD-GIVEN FRUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaving others with the fragrance of Christ wherever I go • expressing God's heart for the world • seeing people around me come to know Jesus

WITNESS



THE VERY LAST THING JESUS TOLD HIS FOLLOWERS WAS, "you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). A witness is simply someone who tells what they saw or heard or experienced. A witness tells the story of what happened to them. Anyone who follows Jesus has a story to tell. And no story is boring or uneventful. Every disciple has the very life of God pulsing through his or her body. Every disciple has been set free, released, redeemed, forgiven, made new and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. All disciples have stories of God's work in their lives that are meant to help set others free. Testifying to this good news requires no strategy or program. It depends on responding to the Spirit's nudge to open your mouth and heart for the sake of others.

Paul, the first great missionary of the church, told his story in myriad ways, suiting his message to his audience. In Athens, Paul argued with Greeks, quoting philosophers and using apologetics to present the good news of Jesus (Acts 17). In Corinth, Paul lived in community with Priscilla and Aquila. He supported himself by making tents so he could stay long enough to plant a church. In Rome, Paul spent two years in his own rented house "and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31). In Jerusalem, Paul told the story of his conversion (Acts 22). When on trial before Felix, Paul defended himself and gave an account of his belief in the "resurrection of the dead." Paul suited what he said to who he was with. He didn't have a formula for witnessing. But he did have a desire to share the life-changing love of Jesus that couldn't be shut down.

Still Paul knew that it was not up to him to convert anyone. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 he writes, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." God is the one who draws people to himself, and he is pleased to use us in the process.

The early church continued to follow Paul's and Jesus' example. Believers committed themselves to living the Christ-in-me life in the midst of the world. Writing to non-Christians, the early church father Tertullian said in *The Apology*, "We live in the world with you. We do not forsake forum or bath or workshop, or inn, or market, or any other place of commerce. We sail with you, fight with you, farm with you." Witness to the life-changing

Jesus happens on the job and in the everyday comings and goings of life. The litmus test for witness is not simply an ability to explain the good news. It is the way you live the good news.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is it like for you to share your faith with others?
2. What would make it easier and more comfortable for you to talk about what Christ has done for you?
3. What is it like for you to interact with people who have different beliefs than you?
4. If you feel your own "redemption story" is uneventful or uninteresting, how does that affect your ability to share the good news with others?
5. What things do you think someone needs to know about Jesus before they can become his follower?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. God changed the course of Israel's life when he rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. Their redemption story is found in the book of Exodus. Read the story of Israel's rescue. • You also have a "redemption story" about how God has found and rescued you. Write an account of your redemption story. How might God use this story to set others free? • Share the story of your journey to freedom in Christ with a friend.
2. There are wonderful evangelism tools and training programs that can assist you in learning how to share your faith. Check out <www.saltshaker.org> or <www.alpha.org>.
3. Make a list of the people you are praying will respond to God. Beside each name list one intentional way you can be the face of God to them in the next month.
4. Write an account of how God has been at work in your life in the past six months. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you sensitive and open to an opportunity to share your experience with a seeking friend.

Resources on Witness

Out of the Saltshaker by Rebecca Manley Pippert
Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God by J. I. Packer
Saltshaker Ministries <www.saltshaker.org>
The Alpha Course <www.alpha.org>