

“In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us.”

(1 Corinthians 5:19-20)

“You are witnesses of these things.”

(Luke 24:48)

Being a “Witness” of Christ

In everyday life, a “witness” is one who is called upon to speak the truth of what they have seen and heard. In the context of faith, to be a witness of Christ means we are called to speak honestly with others about what God has done in our life and what we have experienced as followers of Jesus.

Used as a verb, “to witness” is to tell the story of Christ’s work in you, and what this faith means in your life. To witness is not to “convert” others; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to simply be “ambassadors for Christ,” knowing that “God is making his appeal through us.”

Guidelines for Witnessing

The task of being a witness of Christ may seem intimidating at first, but it is actually a very natural result of faith. The following are a few words of advice that may help you feel more comfortable:

Get Personal... About Yourself!

Sharing your faith means communicating the message of what Jesus means to *you*. Don't be afraid to speak in subjective terms (“I have felt... I have experienced ...”). Not only is this genuine, but it is often less threatening.

Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he? (John 4:29)

Give, Don't Take

The goal in witnessing is to tell God’s story, not to get something from the listener. In sharing your faith, think of yourself as one who is **giving** something. Your goal is not to “win” or to “make a sale” but simply to communicate a message — the Good News that you have experienced in Christ.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures ... (1 Corinthians 15:3)

Be a Good Listener

To be respected when you speak, you must be willing to listen. You must be willing to go to the place another person is, if you want to tell them where you are.

Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. (Hebrews 2:18)

Don't Be Defensive (or Offensive)

Don't assume a position of superiority (“I know better”); it closes off any hope for real conversation. And don't be afraid to let the other person say what they really think and feel. Avoid the temptation to get defensive. You do not need to defend God (or God’s reputation); God is able to defend himself.

By the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Romans 12:3)

Be Honest and Consistent

Witnessing is about telling the truth of faith in your life, not what you think faith *ought* to be. Be honest about your own struggles and where faith has addressed your real life.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 Jn 1:8)

Name the Name

As ambassadors for Christ, it is essential to name the name of Jesus Christ. It is Christ whom we represent, and He is the one about whom we witness. More than simply offering religious words and sentiments, we must get to what really counts.

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified ... so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:1)

Some Key Christian Concepts to Keep in Mind As You Talk:

We Are Saved by Christ Alone

- *In Biblical Terms:* We are saved by Christ alone, not by human works, decisions, or cooperation.
- *In Secular Terms:* We can't make it in life on our own; we need something outside of ourselves.

Human Sin is a Reality

- *In Biblical Terms:* We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.
- *In Secular Terms:* Coming to terms with a problem requires acknowledging that problem's power over us.

God is the Source of Truth

- *In Biblical Terms:* What we know of God comes only through what God has revealed in his Word.
- *In Secular Terms:* A self-made belief system is only as real as our human imagination.

God Works through Natural Means

- *In Biblical Terms:* God uses real, physical instruments (like us) to get his work done in the world.
- *In Secular Terms:* We live in a real world; beliefs have meaning “where the rubber hits the road.”

Faith is Trust

- *In Biblical Terms:* True faith is resting our hope in Christ alone for grace, mercy, and salvation.
- *In Secular Terms:* Everybody looks to something for well-being and security; the question is, to what?

Suggested Scripture for Those Asking Questions of Faith:

For those looking to explore the witness of God's own Word in Scripture, a helpful place to begin might be with these books:

The Book of Psalms demonstrates a wide variety of emotions and experiences reflected in the lives of people of faith: from the confession of physical and spiritual need, to the joy of praise and thanksgiving to God.

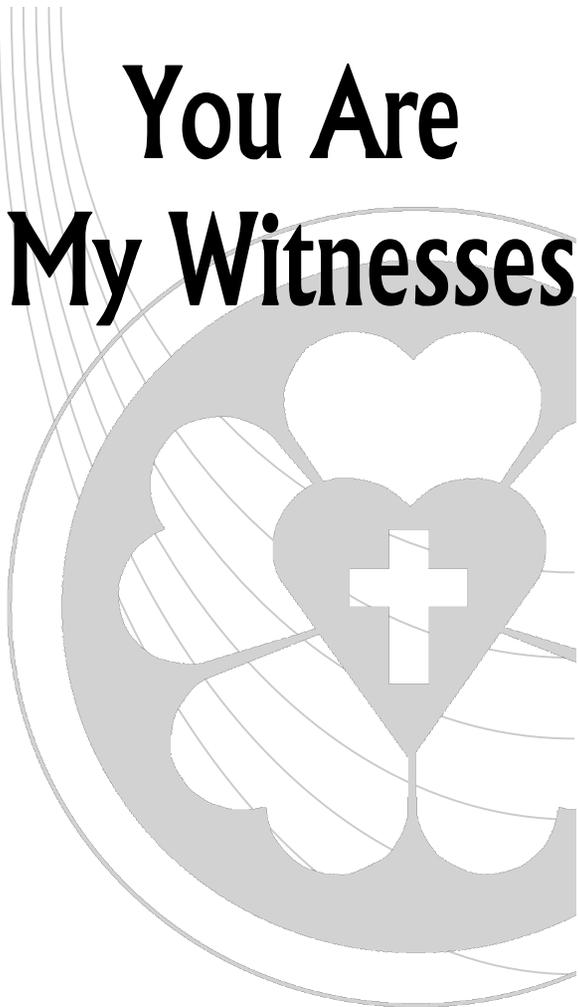
The Gospel of John tells the story of Jesus' life. It gives many examples of people's reactions to Jesus — faith, unbelief, doubt, skepticism, etc. Through it all, John clearly witnesses to Jesus as the Savior of the world.

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You Are My Witnesses



Sola Publishing – Educational Series:

What Does This Mean?

Jesus said:

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8 NRSV)