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Sharing Our Stories from God

All of us have a personal experience of how we've walked with God. With your story, it's full of incredible details; there are ups and downs, there are successes, mistakes and failures, and there's also determination and overcoming. There are moments within your history when you didn't know if you'd make it, and all you had was one Word from God. You've had close friends leave you during difficult times, while others stood by your side. You do not give yourself enough credit for the strength that you showed in the tough times of your past. There was hope that you placed into God, that brought you through every struggle, and will continue to carry you through the rest of your life.

You have a story, and it's very important for you to share it. You will come across many people in your life needing to hear what you've been through, and how you overcame. I think we rely too much on preachers to share the gospel, instead of each of us reaching out and sharing with the people around us. Now don't get me wrong, I absolutely believe in preachers, but I also believe that people need to hear the Word of God in a practical way. They need to hear how the Word of God worked within your past. The Word of God is for each individual, and your tale can help others to see that God is for them as well. God will meet anyone right in the midst of the storms of their life, and walk them to victory, but many people don't trust that He loves them that much.

It is important to speak our testimony both for the ones who hear it and also for ourselves. It says in Revelations 12:11, *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."* I've always believed that sharing our testimony was part of my overcoming, and a way of passing on hope to others.

If you feel unqualified to share about God and are tempted to leave it to the "professionals", I hope you realize just how important your story is in helping others to see God personally in their lives. I've discovered that most people assume that the promises of God are for other people. They can sit inside a church listening to a minister speak on how God is a wonderful provider, and an incredible healer, and yet they don't feel qualified personally to receive it. These same people will say "amen" to the sermon, because they agree that God is all of those things, and yet if you ask them about it in the parking lot they will say it is not for them. They would explain that even though they know God is perfect and amazing, they also know that they personally are not perfect enough yet to receive all those wonderful things. "Maybe when I walk in more holiness I'll deserve a miracle", they might tell you. This is the majority of believers and they need to hear from you! They need to hear your story of all that God brought you through, so that they can grab a hold of those promises. Your story helps others to see the Word of God in action.

There are two ways to tell your story: you can either tell it from the mountain top, or from the valley. The mountain top preachers always speak of how wonderful their life is, and of all the blessings they are

walking in. They would say, "You want what I have? Do you want the finances that I have? Do you want the lifestyle that I'm living?" or, "If you want God to use you like He is using me, then you should listen to me!" Although I believe it's a good thing to talk about God's blessings, I have found that most people have a hard time walking in someone else's footsteps. In fact, God has specific steps for each individual that meet them where they are, and a path that helps bring them into victory. If all we ever do is preach from this position, then many people will give up in discouragement, never feeling adequate enough to "qualify" for God's blessings.

There is another way to share and it's just as David did in the Old Testament. He speaks openly and candidly of the ups and downs he's experienced, but also how his eyes stayed on God, as he beautifully says in Psalm 23:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."

Speaking from the valley is very humbling. In exposing our mistakes and struggles with others, it makes us very vulnerable. But by expressing our total reliance on God we also give hope. The greatest moment we can share is when we chose to trade our weakness for His strength. Speaking from the valley is always more powerful than from the mountaintop. In other words: don't wait until you are perfect to talk. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13, *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."*

I've heard it said that we are taking our tests and turning them into our testimonies. What strength to look into the enemy's eyes and share God's goodness, all the while walking through your personal battle! Not only do you get to win, but you are also able to encourage many people around you while you win. The enemy suffers twice for messing with you. My prayer is that God places the right people in front of you to hear your story and when the opportunity arises, share it. Even if it is from the valley, soon you'll be on the mountain top praising God for complete victory!

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