

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-8 Method: Storytelling

So far this course has defined effective communication and discussed the authority God gives to witness. As believers, we must share both our stories and God's story. We tell about what we have seen and heard. Why? Because Christ commands it and the Holy Spirit directs it. God prepares both the sender and the receiver of the message, so his purposes are accomplished. This lesson begins a series of ten lessons about methods of effective communication. This lesson will discuss the use of storytelling as an effective method. It will show how stories can communicate God's truth.

In your culture, what words does a story teller use to begin his story? Does he use the words, "Once upon a time...", or perhaps, "There was and there was not..."? God's holy story begins with telling us about himself, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"(Gen 1:1). This truth gives the key to understanding all the other stories of the Bible. God created all things in heaven and on earth.

The first real story in the Bible is the creation of the universe. The second gives the account of Adam and Eve. It includes the creation of Adam and his naming of the animals. It describes God's building of the woman from a piece of Adam's side. God had instructed him not to eat from the tree in the center of the Garden of Eden. Satan, however, tempted both man and woman with a false statement about God. They listened to Satan and sinned against God. They tried to hide from God, but they were put out of the Garden. The rest of the Bible unfolds the story of God's plan to bring people out of hiding and back into fellowship with him.

The stories in the Bible help us to understand God and his plan. He had prepared a perfect place for his children to live. They rebelled against God and believed the lies of his enemy Satan. The rest of God's story tells how he called people back to himself. He opened the way back to himself through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus. The church, the body of Christ, now tells this story everywhere. The story of Jesus provides meaning and direction to the church today. Even our being identified as 'Christians,' shows that we follow Christ.

In his second letter, the apostle Peter shared part of his story with the Church. "We did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain" (2Pet 1:16-18).

Peter reminded them that their faith did not rest on false, made-up stories. Their faith rested on the power of God witnessed by Peter himself. He made reference to the events at the Transfiguration. There Jesus appeared with his heavenly glory as he spoke to Moses and Elijah. There the three disciples closest to Jesus heard God's voice from heaven. He declared, "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Then Peter reminds the church of the

certainty of the words of the prophets of old. Their words can be depended on, for prophets did not just imagine things. They wrote true stories as the Spirit enabled them.

The prophets' words are compared to "a light shining in a dark place.... Understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2Pet 1:19-21). These stories come from eyewitness accounts, from the prophets of old. They reveal the truth about God and his nature.

Effective stories help people understand their own world and the world of others. The Bible reveals God through the stories of real people in the past who met him. The Bible records the acts of God as a part of the lives of people. God didn't just give us a book full of principles or doctrines about himself. He gave us the record of people who encountered him. God gave us a book full of pictures of imperfect people just like ourselves. Their stories help us to understand God. And your stories about meeting God will help those around you too!

Bible stories provide a way for people to find order and meaning for their lives. In all cultures, people think in stories. They see events taking place. They may imagine stories to explain real-life circumstances. God's stories help people know God, not just facts about him. Experiences of Bible characters teach us today and can shape and guide our lives. When people compare their own lives and the lives of biblical characters, they find the answers to their questions and strength to face their fears.

We will communicate effectively, like Jesus did, when we continue to tell his story. People need to hear and understand this story of God's love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God uses the scripture stories we tell others work to change lives and bring people to faith. God will also use your salvation story to reach lost people around you.

This story is **important** because it shows that God chose to tell us stories that describe him instead of doctrines that define him. We learn to know God as we hear how he met and changed people in Bible times. We also learn to know him as we learn the stories of believers in our times.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God himself used stories to reveal the truth about his nature and his love.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Why is the story of Adam and Eve so important? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that this story is important because the rest of the Bible shows God's plan to bring people out of hiding into fellowship with him, you are correct.
2. Why is the Bible necessary for believers today? [Pause]
 - A. If you said the Bible is necessary for believers because its stories help us to understand God's nature and his love, you are correct.

3. How can we effectively communicate the truth of God? [Pause]

A. If you said that we can communicate effectively as we continue to tell his stories and stories of our experiences with him to others, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the stories of Adam and Eve and also the story of the transfiguration. Tell them to someone who has not heard them before. Then ask them these questions, “Which are easier to understand, speeches or stories? What stories can you tell from the Bible that effectively communicate the truth that God wants unbelievers to hear?” Make a list of some of the major stories you would use.