

# FORT WORTH CITY CHURCH

## SHARING YOUR STORY

In the early stages of your discipleship groups (and in most relationships), it is helpful for everyone to share their stories with one another. This provides you with an opportunity to learn more about each other, your experiences, your struggles, your redemption, and where you are today. Telling your story isn't about ranking who has the most challenging life or the darkest struggles, it's about creating a community of transparency, trust, celebration, and confession. In the gospel, we don't fear sin or try to prove ourselves. We're free to not take ourselves too seriously because we take Jesus so seriously.

Here are some tips for telling your story (adapted from Mike Wilkerson's Redemption Group materials).

### **KEEP IT SHORT: AIM FOR 10-15 MINUTES**

If you haven't told your story, you will be surprised how quickly 10-15 minutes go. And if you have, you may think 10-15 minutes is far too short to tell your life story. Folks will likely end up sharing longer than 15 minutes and that's ok. If you take less than 10 minutes, there's a chance you aren't sharing as much as we'd like.

No one can share their *whole* life in 10-15 minutes. We're simply asking that you share the most significant parts of your story like events, relationships, and patterns that shed light on who you are now and what work of healing and transformation God is doing in you. We won't be able to hear *everything* in 10-15 minutes but we do want to get an honest, clear, and significant portrayal of where you came from and who you are that celebrates the grace of God in your life and doesn't try to protect your image.

### **FOLLOW THEMES**

Look for major themes in your life that are meaningful and give us insight into where you are in your growth in Jesus. Pick one (or maybe two). Be sure to share something that reveals where you are today, not just where you were in the past. We only want to hear about the past that is influencing where you are today. Pick a theme that is an active part of your present - a weight, a struggle, or a concern.

For example, I wrestle with an idol of achievement and finding my value in what I get done, so my childhood stories of my father's influence in this regard are important to share. That said, by grace, today I do not wrestle with anger and do not need to share stories of those bouts of anger I have experienced in my life.

The hope is that you can look at where something plays a part in your life today and you work backward to prioritize what you share.

### **WHAT FACTS TO SHARE**

Telling your story is not about listing out the facts of your personal history: where you grew up, what day you were born on, etc. Those are *facts* about your past that may or may not be relevant to

# **FORT WORTH CITY CHURCH**

## **SHARING YOUR STORY**

the *meaning* of your past. We are looking for *meaning*. Share only the facts of your life that help communicate a particular meaning.

### **SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU SHARE**

You are welcome to use some of the following questions to help you tell your story. Remember, look for the parts of your past that influence where you find yourself today.

1. What are some wounds you've experienced in your life? Who wounded, abused, or hurt you?
2. How did you deal with these wounds?
3. What lies (false beliefs about God and the Gospel) do you wrestle with?
4. What sinful habits do you wrestle with?
5. Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, escape, pleasure, or security?
6. What or whom do you love most? Hate most?
7. What do you think you need for your life to be fulfilling?

### **AND SO YOU KNOW**

We are very serious about respecting the privacy of one another as we tell our stories. Please do not share any personal details with anyone outside the Discipleship Group. There may come times when you will need to reach out to a deacon or a pastor for help in working through something but we always want to foster trust and so be sure to ask for permission before sharing details of someone else's story.

After you tell your story, take some time to affirm each other's honesty and willingness to invite one another in as well as ask further questions to get to know each other better. This needs to be done with respect, not speaking profanely, minimizing pain, trivializing problems with simplistic advice, or speaking harshly.

Lastly, there will be times of healthy discomfort in your Discipleship Group because sin and suffering can be hard to face. We will trust in the Holy Spirit to be the Comforter that Jesus promised Him to be and will avoid coddling or rescuing others by speaking too soon. As said before, this isn't about ranking who has the most challenging life or the darkest struggles, it's about creating a community of transparency, trust, celebration, and confession. In the Gospel, we don't fear sin or try to prove ourselves. We are free to not take ourselves too seriously because we take Jesus so seriously.