



The Norm Series

Part 5 - "Sharing Your Story"

Small Group Material

April 9th, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *As you understand your story within God's story, when you share your life you share God's story.*

Study Verses: *Romans 1:16-17, 2 Kings 7:3-9, 1 Peter 3:15-16*

Define The Win: *Participants would recognize that as believers they are called to help others, not fix them or view them as projects. They would understand the influence they've been given and the potential impact they could have right where they are. They would be able to articulate their story and the reason for the hope they have. Group members would also pinpoint who they are investing in.*

Key Points

- *People aren't projects so don't treat them as one.*
- *Impact is about your life connecting with someone else's.*
- *The Gospel isn't a simple message - it's a whole new way of thinking and living.*
- *Your next step of faith is for the sake of the other steps that come after it.*
- *Faith isn't something you graduate from. God will never lead you into being independent of Him.*
- *You never know how God is going to use you. We are called to plant seeds and trust God's work.*

- *People should look at our lives and wonder why we are hopeful.*
- *When you share your life, you are sharing your story.*
- *God has you right where you are for a reason.*
- *You have the most influence, therefore you have the most impact.*

ENCOUNTER

- **What makes you hesitate in sharing the Gospel, as well as your story, with others? What fuels this apprehension?**
- **What is the danger in viewing people as projects? How does having this viewpoint influence your approach, motives and actions with others?**
- **Who had the most impact in your faith journey? How did this individual open your eyes to the freedom the Gospel provides?**

FORMATION

- **Read Romans 1:16-17. How is the power of our story influenced by our willingness to take a step of faith? Why does our story require faith?**
- **Read 2 Kings 7:3-9. How does the story of the four lepers speak to what we should do with the good news we've been given?**
- **Read 1 Peter 3:15-16. How should the way we live our lives fuel curiosity in others? If someone were to ask you why do you have hope, how would you answer them?**

EXPRESSION

- **When people look at your life, what do they see? How does this picture make you feel?**
- **God has you right where you are for a reason. If this is true, how are you making an impact in the place where you are planted?**
- **Who needs to hear your story? Who are you investing in? Why does this person come to mind?**
- **How has your view of the Gospel changed or been strengthened during "The Norm" series? What was the greatest insight you received? What are you going to do with what you've learned over the past few weeks?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *Stories are huge when it comes to our faith. They have a way of capturing our attention. Think about it, everyone loves a good story – they inspire, they give hope, they speak of redemption. Every story is a good story if the Gospel is a part of it. This includes your story.*

Sadly, some of you doubt that last statement is true. In your eyes, your story is too mundane and run of the mill. Nothing exciting happened. You've always "been a Christian," grew up in the church and had no moments of rebellion. And because of this you think God can't use your story. Or, perhaps you are on the other end of the spectrum. There are numerous parts of your story that include things you are embarrassed about. Just thinking about sharing your story with others makes you cringe. The shame you feel overwhelms any desire you have to let God use your story to impact others.

Regardless of where you find yourself, you shy away from telling your story. So, we'll say it again: your story is a good story if the Gospel is a part of it. If you don't believe your story is a good story, then you won't tell it, and it's so important that we share our stories. As you understand your story within God's story, when you share your life you share God's story.

Now, stop for a second and ponder: what would it look like to appreciate the story God is telling through your life? God is in control and He's preparing you for something. He's using your circumstances and experiences to make His name known. If you think your story is mundane, learn to appreciate what God has protected you from. Maybe your story includes a difficult and chaotic past. Wrestle through your past with God, allow Him to heal you and get to a place where you can appreciate what you've learned as a way to walk with others through similar things.

Part of our responsibility as believers is to reach people, share the good news of Jesus Christ, reveal to them Christ's love, and be ambassadors for God (2 Corinthians 5:17). This process begins by reflecting the hope we have in Christ through our actions and words. It also involves sharing our story. We need to move in a direction that allows us to reveal to others how to have a relationship with God and the hope we have been given.

We're called to share our story, not deliver a sales pitch. Talking about the Gospel isn't laying out a marketing scheme aimed to get individuals to sign their name on the dotted line. People aren't projects so we can't treat them as one. The relationships we have with others shouldn't have an agenda. Our responsibility is to help and love others, not fix them. We are to plant the seeds and trust God with the work. Our responsibility is to love God and love people. The kind of love that we encountered is a love that transforms. The same unconditional love that has transformed our lives we have to pass on to those around us. Impact is about our life connecting with someone else's.

This begins by expressing what He has done in our own lives and pointing to the hope that we have found in Christ. People should look at our lives and wonder why we are hopeful. True change causes people to take notice of God working in our life. The message that speaks volumes to family and friends is our life impacted by God's love. When we share our story, people can relate to us, our story, and the God we serve.