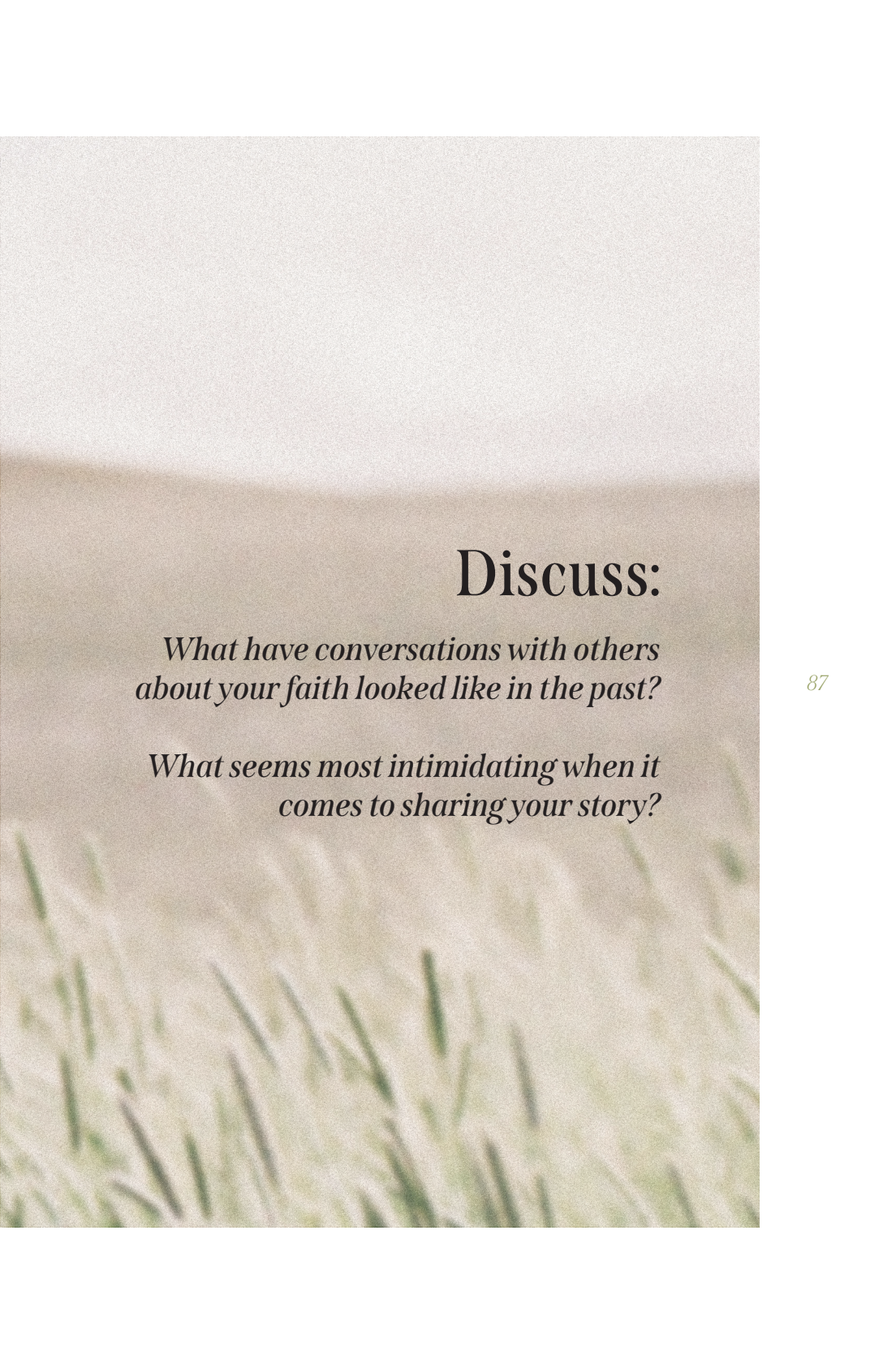


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Your Story

*How do I talk to my friends and family
about my new life?*



Discuss:

*What have conversations with others
about your faith looked like in the past?*

*What seems most intimidating when it
comes to sharing your story?*

Psalm 107

¹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. ² Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, ³ those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. ⁴ Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. ⁵ They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away.

⁶ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ⁷ He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. ⁸ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, ⁹ for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. ¹⁰ Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, ¹¹ because they rebelled against God's commands and despised the plans of the Most High.

¹² So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. ¹³ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. ¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains. ¹⁵ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, ¹⁶ for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron. ¹⁷ Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. ¹⁸ They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. ²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. ²¹ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. ²² Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy. ²³ Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. ²⁴ They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep.

²⁵ For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. ²⁶ They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. ²⁷ They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end. ²⁸ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. ²⁹ He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰ They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

³¹ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. ³² Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders. ³³ He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, ³⁴ and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there. ³⁵ He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; ³⁶ there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle.

³⁷ They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; ³⁸ he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish. ³⁹ Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow; ⁴⁰ he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.

⁴¹ But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks. ⁴² The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths. ⁴³ Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.

Throughout this Psalm, we see God rescuing people – from darkness, from sin, from wandering and from themselves. Like them, we were all rescued from something, and like them, we all have stories to tell.

Chances are if you look back over your life, you will see the orchestration of God. You might point to the time when you started to search for something of meaning or the moment you first experienced God. Then there was the day you were captivated by the love of God and chose to give Him control. While these might seem to be isolated events, they are all connected and contribute to the larger story of God’s redemption in your life.

As we think about our lives as a story, we begin to see His work in our lives. We are the redeemed. Just as He did for the people in Psalm 107, God has saved us and brought us out of our former life. But His work doesn’t stop there. He saved us, but He also wants us to tell our story. Psalm 107:2 says, “Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story.” Our individual stories weren’t written to be kept to ourselves. Stories are written to be told, and God wants to use our stories to draw people to the even larger story of the Gospel.

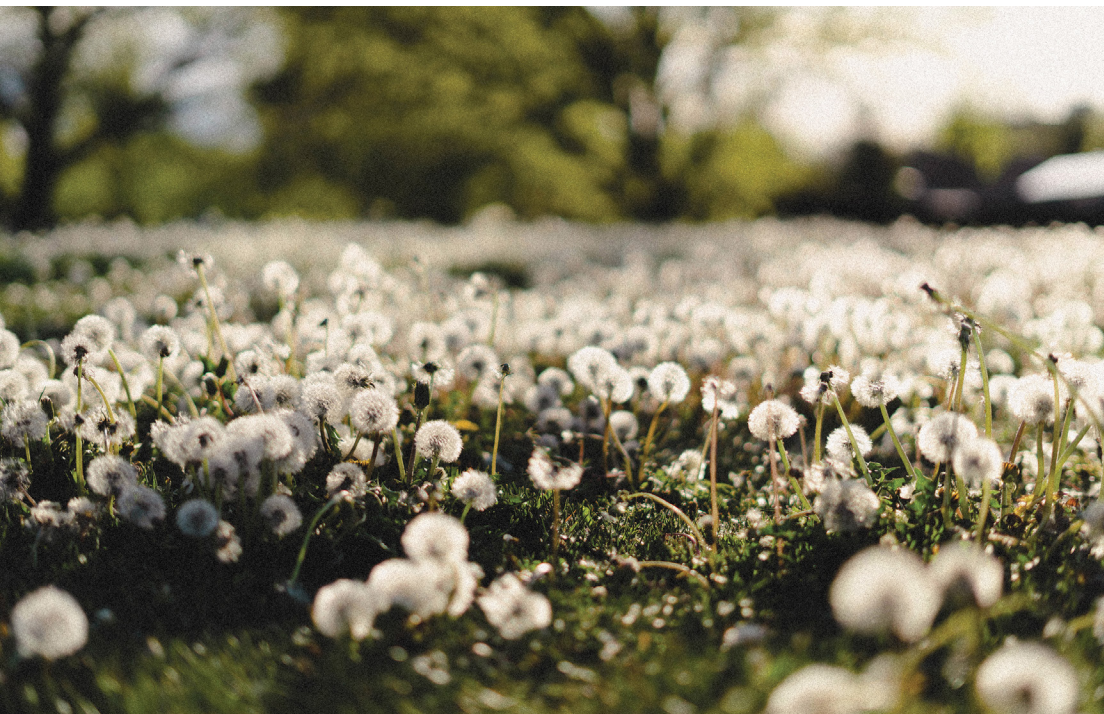
As a follower of Christ, you are brought into a story bigger than your life. The Bible tells the story of a broken world and its Creator’s mission to redeem and restore it. In the New Testament, we see God becoming man and dying for our reconciliation. God then gave His followers the job of applying the redemption Christ provided for us. With this job, we have a new identity and purpose.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

This passage details our new focus. 2 Corinthians 5:20 appoints us as the ambassadors of Christ. An ambassador is a person who is sent by their native country as its official representative to a foreign nation. Their post affects every area of their life from where they live to what they eat and drink. They are identified by their nation of origin and their every action reflects on their homeland.

As ambassadors of Christ, we have a mission that requires our lives. God wants to tell His story through us. Just as the ambassador's actions reflect on his country, our actions reflect on Christ. We don't have the option of compartmentalizing our faith. God is as much a part of our Thursday as He is our Sunday. Acting right however is not the ambassador's sole job. He must speak. While his actions affect how his words are received, He was sent to speak on behalf of his country. In the same way, God makes His appeal to our world through us. We are his mouthpiece to our world.

As one who has been redeemed, you have a story to tell. As an ambassador of Christ, your job is to tell that story—through your actions and through your conversations. Let us learn our stories well and train our minds to see them in light of the Gospel so that God can use us to reveal His glory.



ACTION STEPS

Write out the story of your life as a timeline of events.

Now write out your story connecting it to the gospel. The hope is not for you to be able to give more information about yourself, but for you to tell a story where God is the hero of your life. To help you with this, here's a useful tool. These questions will help you see Christ in the stages of your life:

What was your life like Before Jesus?
What did you chase after? What was your identity built on?

Why Jesus?
How did you come to a realization that there was something more? What clicked?

What has your life been like Since Jesus?
How are you becoming a new creation? What events in your life
has He used to deepen your understanding of Himself?

Finally, moving forward, where are you Following Jesus?
What are your passions? What stirs you? What causes you angst?
How can you dream of living a story oriented around bringing
glory to God and proclaiming His story?

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Using what you've written, tell your story to another Christian.
Then tell your story to someone you know that is not a Christian.

