

## CH 1 — Part 1

### STOP TALKING AND TESTIFY

Many of us do a lot of talking, whether in person or on social media, but how often do we use our voices to testify about the goodness of the Lord?

When it comes to talking, people get into the habit of going on and on, carrying on conversations that have no true meaning, and no real value. How often when speaking to a friend, family member, or spouse, can *testimony* be heard in our conversation?

Every believer, regardless of background, has a testimony God can use to change the outlook of life for another. Sometimes when we speak, we seek to reinforce our own logic, or gain attention for ourselves. When we give control to the Holy Spirit, inviting God to use our words, our stories, our voices, He can use us for good. When our goal is dominating the conversation, or talking to pass time, the spirit has no room to influence the conversation.

Some people crawl into a shell when the spiritual things of life come up, but 2 Timothy 1:8 says, “So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” Sometimes we just want to chat about sports or the weather, and not every conversation is a Jesus-conversation, but Christ should be seen in and through what we say. The more we allow our conversations to be led by the Spirit, the more our conversations will be saturated with substance, rather than being engulfed in daily problems & complaints.

For the spirit to have full rein in our lives, we must be bold in our testimony; our boldness must be in what God has delivered us from. God delivered me from a twelve year incarceration and because of my testimony, when I speak — I speak of the joy, the love, the wisdom I gained. By honoring God more than my past condition, the spirit can flow, and bless those who I come in contact with.

What has God delivered you from? The Lord may have delivered you from drugs, past pain, smoking, abuse — whatever He has freed us from, we honor Him best when we focus on His mercy, and not the logic of this world.

Why is the natural human drive to speak so *strongly ingrained* in most of us? Maybe because *listening* takes patience and time, while frivolous talking allows us to hide from the fear of rejection or judgment, and to avoid true intimacy by complaining instead of embracing someone else's truth with one closed mouth and two open ears. Maybe we don't fear the testimony — we fear the truth the spirit will reveal; a truth that reveals our authentic selves in a light that may not initially be bright, or appealing.

This state of truth, of living in the light, brings peace.

It is in this state that we can help others move beyond the superficial.

The miseducation of 'testimony' is that it can only be shared in a church. Truth is spoken each time we open our mouths to testify of the goodness of God, rather than make small talk in order to avoid real conversation.

Testimonies are not all about presentation, but obedience to the Spirit that allows the Spirit of God to be seen in you, and through all you do. Your testimony is your life, and your words provide the detail. God has allowed us to be where we are today for a reason and the things we have been through to get here are testimonies. Testimonies are followed by how you live your life.

Not every conversation we have should be serious — balance matters, and Jesus enjoys a hearty laugh just as we do; there is a productive balance that must be implemented. Our duty in life is to elevate each person we can to have a deeper relationship with Jesus.

## **ASK YOURSELF...**

1. Are you allowing your talking to take you more into the world, and further from the flow of the Spirit?
2. What would it look like in action, if you focused more of your conversations on sharing your testimony, rather than idle chit chat?
3. What percentage of your time in conversation is spent talking? What percentage of time do you spend listening? How would your conversations changed if you flipped those two numbers?