



## Session 4

### Your *before & after* Story and the Balanced Christian Life

When you get baptized, you'll invite your family and friends. They get to hear your *before-and-after* story, how you opened your life to God and began to follow Jesus. In Session 3 we said to **P-L-A-N** it. Here's how.

#### Writing your story

*Assignment: Write your before-and-after story in 100 words or less (see next page)*

*Share it with at least 3 people. Ask them to evaluate.*

*was it clear, with one idea*

*was it simple, no churchy language?*

*was it humble and kind, not proud?*

How's this: **Express your story in 100 words or Less.** Why so few words? People don't need to know everything about you. Perhaps they don't want to. 😊 **They need to know what brought you to Jesus, and how he changed you.**

Then they'll ask, *could Jesus do this for me?*

#### How can you do that? Suggestions:

Keep it short.

Make it clear.

Focus on one concept – why did you trust Jesus?

Share with a humble, loving spirit.

Put Jesus in the centre of it.

Use **P-L-A-N** to tell your *before-and-after* story.

**P – Past:** life before I was a Christian (be short, a few sentences)

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*(your answer)*

**L – Lost:** how I came to realize I was lost and without God:

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(your answer)

**A – Accept:** how I searched for God, found him, and trusted Jesus

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(your answer)

**N – Now:** what it means now for me to follow Jesus; what changed in my life

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(your answer)

*(use another piece of paper, if you need more space)*

Take time to write your story. **Remember: 100 words or less! If you can, that is...**

## Stepping out on your Christian Journey

Being a Christian means taking a life-long journey with your Savior, Jesus. He rescued you from a life of emptiness and gave you a new way to live, the *Jesus-way*. He'll teach you how as you walk with him.

The Christian journey starts with these first steps. A famous Chinese philosopher said it well.

*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Lao-tzu*

Your first step is **faith**. You stop being independent from God. You make a U-turn and put your life into Jesus' hands. You trust him to rescue you from sin and death.

You get forgiven. God gives you a new life and the power to live out his purpose for your life: ***glorify God in everything.***

It's God's goodness – his grace – that you have this chance to hear the good news of Jesus! Here's what the Bible says:

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it's a gift from God. Ephesians 2.8*

You start with a step of faith. Let's!

The next step? **Obedience**. Jesus is your Lord, your Boss. You get baptized, like he commanded you to do. Then you start your life journey, trusting and obeying Jesus. Here's God's word to you:

*And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you'll overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2.6-7*



**The Balanced Christian Life**

This wheel diagram shows you the basics of following Jesus. Think *wheel* as in bike riding.

Ever have a bike with a unbalanced wheel? What made it unbalanced? \_\_\_\_\_ (*your answer*) What was it like to ride? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (*your answer*) How about a bike

with a flat tire? Any fun to ride? \_\_\_\_\_ (*no is the only*

*answer, right!*)

Same with the *Christian Life* wheel. You need a wheel with no missing spokes. That way it's balanced. Plus the wheel rim can't have a flat tire. You won't go far or fast (or have fun) unless it is. What does this have to do with your Christian journey? Let's see.

## Hub

Every wheel needs a center, a hub. **The hub of your life now is Jesus.** You put him at the center, where all your decisions are made, your dreams are birthed. Your lifestyle will now match his. You'll follow his teachings and obey his commands.

What things have you seen people putting at the center of their lives?

\_\_\_\_\_ (your answer)

How about you? Before you became a Christian, what was your life hub?

\_\_\_\_\_ (your answer)

## Spokes

There are four spokes in the *Christian Life* wheel. Two horizontal, two vertical.

**The vertical spokes show how to connect to God.** You **listen** to him by reading and studying the Bible. You **respond** to God by talking with him. Your conversation with God is called **prayer**, of course.

Remember being a little kid? How does a preschooler learn to listen and talk to a parent? How are you like this, with God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (your answer)

You want to make the Bible your Life-guide book and teach you to talk to God anywhere, about everything. Stages will help you do that!

**The horizontal spokes show how to connect with others.**

One horizontal spoke says **Church**, the new family God gives you. When you believed in Jesus, God adopted you. Now you have sisters and brothers who belong to God too, a global family! In a church you'll learn to love your new family, enjoy their company and serve them.

Have you already met some Christian brothers and sisters? Who? \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

The other horizontal spoke says **Witness**. It shows us how to relate to the culture around you and to your friends who aren't Christians yet. You become *salt and light* like Jesus said, in your family, school and community.

### **Rim**

**One last part of the wheel is the rim.** The Christian life's not just knowing new things. It's learning to love God back (he started this love relationship with you, right!). How? By obeying him. What Jesus commands, you try to do. You obey.

One final question. What's Jesus asking you to do today? How will you obey him?

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*(your answer)*

**Next Session: What's after baptism**