

Summer Road Trip - Share Your Experience

When you go on a road trip, and you consider all of the things you will experience, (lodging, restaurants, activities) you can rely on other people's reviews and recommendations.

I'm a believer in Yelp. I always look up places on Yelp before I go there. And when you look at a Yelp review, some people are just good at marketing, they post good pictures and descriptions. But how many of you know that people and businesses are not always who they say they are?

I want to believe them...but I need confirmation. I want to know what others experienced because that is what helps to set my expectations for my experience.

Now if the company says they are great, and they look great, AND someone tells me they are great...then I go with excitement and confidence that my experience will meet my expectations.

Did you know our faith journey can do this for someone else?

First, we have what God says, what is written in the scriptures, and then we have what we hear from others...

Ideally, people would first look into what God says for themselves (do their research). If you want to know what Christianity is all about, and what it will be like...it's all laid out in the Word...

But is that always enough? Will they always believe it? Or do they want more? They may be skeptical. Can it really be as good as the bible says it is?

It's like the bible is the listing for a restaurant on Yelp. And it all looks good, but they want that confirmation from someone that's been there and done that...

We are like the reviewers that post on the listing...Our job as believers is to share our experience to CONFIRM that what God said is true!

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Why do we need testimony? To disprove doubt. To defeat the work of the devil that causes people to doubt God's truths. Doubt is the enemy of faith!

Jesus already defeated satan! Amen?

His resurrection is evidence of that. He paid the price for our sin on the cross. But the fact that He was raised from the dead, proves the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice.

He defeated hell, death, and the grave!

And you and I overcome the enemy, by the blood of the lamb. By accepting the sacrifice Jesus made for us and applying it to our lives...faith in Jesus.

Wouldn't it be great if that was it? We overcome the enemy by the blood of the lamb...and we're done? But there's an "and".....and by the word of their testimony.

Why do we need the testimony? Isn't the blood of the lamb enough? Of course it is! But then we have moments of doubt which is an enemy of faith.

So we need to come back to that place of testimony...of what God said and has done...and it defeats the doubt therefore continuing to defeat the enemy!

So who here struggles with their testimony?

Does it terrify you to think about sharing your testimony?

Do you think yours isn't that great or powerful? A lot of people do. And I think it's because we've thought too small when it comes to our testimony. Which is just sharing our experience.

Past Experience

We share about where we've been. Usually when people come back from a road trip, they post pictures and share some of their experiences with their friends and family. This is where we went, what we did, how it was...this was our experience.

Typically this is within days of the trip. While it's fresh. Otherwise you don't really bring it up again until someone who remembers and asks you more about it because they too are interested in going there.

And I think this is where our faith testimony stalls out...because we treat it the same way.

When you get saved. You tell everyone. You had something amazing happen and right away you tell about it...but then you put it on the shelf until someone asks you about it.

What God has done?

1 John 5:11 (CSB)

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Hey, if this is all you got for a testimony...it's the best one a person can have. This is where testimony begins. This is the First overcoming the enemy...by the blood of the lamb...

And it's the first of the testimony. You can't overcome the enemy without Jesus! And you don't have any testimony worth sharing without Jesus!

Every time we share what Jesus has done...that He has given us LIFE...and life abundantly...we strike a blow to the devil because the truth of God overcomes the lies of the enemy.

Romans 1:16 (CSB)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

Church, this is the piece of the journey that everyone can go on!

I am not ashamed of the gospel. This means not embarrassed by the good news of the grace of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes people are embarrassed by their testimony, that they are "just saved". PRAISE THE LORD! Don't be embarrassed this is the POWER of God for SALVATION to everyone who believes!

And we have to share it...tell what God has done!

Romans 10:14 (CSB)

How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher?

Share what God has done. Share your past experience.

Present Experience

Some people don't wait until they get home to share their experiences from their road trip. They update their friends and family daily. They post pictures and comments every step of the way.

And even if you don't do that publicly, without thinking about it, you probably do it in other ways.

Have you ever been on a road trip and given a stranger some advice? "Have you been over there? Do this, don't do that? Try the burger at that place or the ice cream at this place."

What are you doing? Sharing your present experience. Sometimes the good, sometimes the bad...

We need to share the same in our faith journey...

What is God doing?

What is going on right now, present day?

Psalm 66:16 (CSB)

Come and listen, all who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for me.

We have this connection with people that came from where you've been or are going where you are going.

You begin to walk alongside them. Give them advice on what you are experiencing. What is Jesus up to in your life right now?

I didn't say what's going wrong in your life right now....what is God up to? Have you ever noticed that we have no problem telling someone what's going wrong?

If you were sharing your experience about your road trip and all you said was that everything was terrible...how many people would want to go there?

It's the same with our faith journey...if all you have to share is how miserable you are...what kind of testimony is that? Everyone has some aspects of their life that isn't going too great...

Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day. What's God doing?

Acts 4:19-20 (CSB)

Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

These men were arrested for sharing the gospel. You think that was a bad day? You think prison sounds fun? You think being dragged into court sounds fun?

But even in the midst of it...they can't stop talking about Jesus! They aren't complaining about their circumstances...what kind of testimony is that? That's what everyone does!

They have been changed by Christ. And because they have been changed by Christ and the same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in them...they testify of His goodness and how He is still working!

We've got to share what God is doing today. If you can't see it, pray, ask Him to show you!

We share past experiences, present experiences, and then we share future experiences.

Future Experience

When it comes to a road trip...once we've been there, done that, don't we think about what we want to do next?

If I can go back to the Grand Canyon, man we saw amazing things, but we weren't able to do it all...I think about things I plan to do next time...

I have no idea when I'll go back because there are also other places I'd like to go. But I have ideas of what I'll do when I go back...just like I have ideas of what I'd do if I went somewhere else.

We dream of and talk about future experiences.

Shouldn't we be doing the same with our faith journey?

Based on where we've been and based on what we know from reading God's Word and hearing the testimony of others...shouldn't we be dreaming and talking about what God is going to do?

Can I tell you that this is part of your testimony?

What is God going to do?

Maybe your road trip has been rough, maybe you had some bad experiences, maybe it hasn't gone the way you planned, you packed things you shouldn't have carried, your conversations weren't too good, you haven't enjoyed the ride...

Do you know that God is still working and if you are on the journey, you have hope and a future?

Do you know that faith changes everything?

Do you know that your belief that the Holy Spirit is working in you because of the blood of the lamb will lead you to look to what God is going to do, and how He is going to work things out somehow for good even if you can't see it?

1 Peter 3:15 (CSB)

but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Why do I believe that God is going to do something? Because of what He's done in the past and because of what He's doing right now.

I know Jesus. I know He's alive.

I know He saves.

I know He redeems.

I know He restores.

I know He heals.
I know He works miracles.
I know He is above all things.
I know He knows all things.
I know He LOVES me.
I know He LOVES you.
I know He prepared a place in heaven.
I know He is coming back for His bride...the church.

And all of this helps me to KNOW that He's not done yet. And when I speak of these things.
Church....that's a testimony!

And it overcomes the enemy of doubt and fear and question and uncertainty.

It's critical that we share our experience from our faith journey.

When we share what we experience, it will have an impact on others who hear our story, and may influence what they decide to do. Like a road trip...their journey won't be identical to yours...but they may model their trip after yours because of what you shared about your experience.

Tell them what God has done. But don't forget about what He's doing right now. And proclaim what He will do in the future. He is faithful to His word. If He said it...it's not just a promise, it's a guarantee!

Daniel 4:2 (CSB)

I am pleased to tell you about the miracles and wonders the Most High God has done for me.