

**Consistently Sharing Your Faith**  
I Peter 3:15-16  
(Freedom Fellowship - April 7, 2024)

Intro:

Hard questions to always ask ourselves

Am I growing? Am I maturing? Am I different from one year, five years to ten years ago? For SPIRITUAL Growth to happen, we need to INTENTIONALLY apply the Spiritual disciplines in our DAILY walk with Christ.

Illustration:

- \* Caring for Natalya
- \* Joy of seeing her development — Sign language, one syllable, clear words, to full sentences. Milestones
- \* We have milestones in our Discipleship walk with the Lord that need to take place; if not, there is a problem.
- \* A Crucial milestone we will be discussing today- Sharing our Faith

PURPOSE: IS TO BUILD, STRENGTHEN, AND GROW YOUR FAITH TODAY!

Billy Graham preached to 210 million souls in over 185 countries over a 50-year ministry career.

QUOTE: “ Our Faith becomes STRONGER as we express it; a GROWING FAITH IS A SHARING FAITH” - Billy Graham

Barna data shows that many Christians feel a calling to share their faith. In fact, half of practicing Christians (52% of those who attend church at least monthly and say their faith is important to them) strongly agree they personally have a responsibility to tell others about their religious beliefs. Aug 16, 2023

Scripture today - I Peter 3:15 (ESV)

**15 BUT in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect**

CONTEXT— Word “BUT” is so important, it's a conjunction that joins the thoughts in the previous verse

**Vs 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled— This was a persecuted church.**

The culture in which they lived was SCORNE D for their faith, CRITICIZED for they lived, and their hope was MOCKED. Peter is encouraging the church to respond to this pressure with a renewed commitment to live out the grace of God, both to please God and to bear witness to him.

How do we start to Bear witness/ to share our Faith Consistently

**1. KEEP YOUR HEART AT ATTENTION-“in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as Holy”-**

A. MEANING: To sanctify/honor Him in your hearts means to make Him the focus of your thoughts, to put God First in your life

B. Why? V 14 Fear is the #1 reason we do not share our faith.

\*Fear will discourage you from sharing your faith. Fear will paralyze you from sharing.

\* The passage is telling us that when you have proper confidence in HIM, and you find refuge and security in him, he will deliver us from Fear.

C. Fear will keep you in your comfort zone.

\* When you stay in your comfort zone, you will stop growing in your understanding of God. — WE CAN NOT MATURE INTO A DEEPER, STRONGER RELATIONSHIP IF WE REMAIN IN THE SHALLOW END OF CHRISTIANITY - EXAMPLE OF A SWIMMING POOL

**2. STAND OUT FOR CHRIST- DON'T BE AN UNDERCOVER CHRISTIAN - “Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect**

\* The greatest tool to use to witness is YOUR LIFE TESTIMONY. Notice that it says “to anyone who asks you”.

\* Remember, they were being persecuted, they were suffering, but their faithfulness and hope stood out in the darkness. People were wondering why these believers had such hope, and would ask.

\*Resist the temptation to play Dr Phil. God places you in conversations to talk about your hope in JESUS.

\* You don't need a pulpit to share the gospel; you have a Mission field that God has assigned you. — Workplace, family, children, neighbors. You carry a pulpit wherever you go.

\* CHURCH, don't be afraid to share amongst yourselves what God has done. Sharing your faith is not only for the unbeliever but for the believer as well. Let's build each other's faith.

### **3. YOU ARE THE CONNECTING LINK - BETWEEN THIS HURTING WORLD AND GOD-**

1. **Beginning** of Jesus' Ministry- Sermon on the Mount (Beatitudes) Matthew 5:14-15 — “You are the light of the world-like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.
2. **End** of Jesus' Ministry before his ascension - Matthew 28:19 (Great Commission) he says, “Therefore, GO and MAKE disciples of all the nations....”

#### **STATS:**

\* CDC- More than 49,000 people in the US died by Suicide in 2022. In 2023, those numbers surpassed 50,000 suicide deaths. It's the Highest rate of suicide that the nation has ever seen.

\* In 2022, there were 129,876 victims of police-reported family violence.

\* CDC- 21 million adults in the U.S. (8.4%) have experienced a major depressive episode.

\* More than 1 in 10 young people in the U.S. are living with depression that disrupts their school, work, or home life.

\* 2022 U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health- 46.8 million (16.7%) Americans aged 12 and older battled a substance use disorder in the past year.  
10.5% of Americans 12 and older had an alcohol use disorder in the last year

WE are the connecting link between the One who can bring true healing to this hurting world.

Sometimes fear takes a grip on us, and we feel not equipped to share. BUT

**Acts 1:8** says, - But you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

**John 14:26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**2 Timothy 1:7-8** For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love and sound judgment.

**Isaiah 41:10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Romans 8:26** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: