

testify

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KBM MEDIA

Hearts on fire, lives on purpose

Introduction

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

(Acts 4:18–20)

Testify
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I JUST LOVE PETER. Sometimes, you’ll hear pastors and theologians give him a hard time for nearly drowning due to a lack of faith when he attempted to walk on water to Jesus. Or they’ll criticize him for not being in tune with God’s sovereign plan when he ripped out his sword and sliced off the ear of one of those who had come to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But to me, Peter was the ultimate picture of courage. Throughout his life, both while he walked with Jesus and after his Savior’s death and resurrection, Peter was so brimming with zeal and excitement about what Christ had done in his life that he *could not help but testify* about what he had seen and heard.

In other words, Peter’s life had been so radically transformed that he literally could not contain himself—he could not keep quiet—about Christ’s intervention in his life.

What about us? Is that our experience? Has Christ indeed transformed us?

If so, do we have a difficult time containing all of the extraordinary stories about what Jesus has done and is doing in our lives? Or have we lost our zeal? Have we forsaken our first love?

That's what Jesus pointed out to the Church of Ephesus: "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first" (Revelation 2:4, 5a).

Look, I'm forty years old. I understand we Christians can get burned out. That's one of the reasons I've decided to write this book. I want to help you (and help myself) return to our first love, to remember the height from which we may have fallen, and to repent and do the things we did at first—like sharing with the world what Jesus Christ has done for us and what He died on the cross to do for them.

One day I was listening to a dear friend speak to a large crowd at a church, and right in the middle of his talk, I was quickened by the Holy Spirit and challenged to write the book you now hold in your hands.

Why?

Because this man, this dear friend of mine, was telling everyone else's story but not his own. Now, in no way am I knocking this man of whom I speak. On the contrary. I have heard him speak and have been moved by his words on a number of occasions. Because he served in the military, he loves war stories. He is a true historian, and his tales date from Jesus to Napoleon Bonaparte, from George Washington to today's contemporaries. He is a wonderful communicator and a master storyteller.

I have no doubt this gentleman spends anywhere from forty to sixty hours a week in his office doing research. I'm sure he is a master of Internet search engines. I'm certain he pours over commentaries, quote books, history texts, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* to pull together the most intriguing historical facts to weave into his Sunday sermons for the most powerful impact and takeaway for his listeners.

But the last time I heard the man speak, I began replaying all the times I'd ever heard him over the years and, for the life of me, I could not recall one time when he ever told his own story. Or when he

talked about his own family. Or when he shared about his relationship with his wife. Or when he did street ministry downtown. Or when he ever shared his faith with a stranger in line at the store or with a waiter at a restaurant.

In all the times I heard him speak, I never heard him share a story from his heart about his own life and testimony.

That's what challenged me to write this book. I started pondering the power of our testimony. I started understanding that when we are unafraid to share how God has intervened in our lives and transformed us, that's when other people's lives will be impacted for eternity.

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death" (Revelation 12: 11).

Boom.

Are you challenged by that? I sure am!

It's my prayer that this little book will cause us to return to our first love and to recapture that zeal that once burned in our souls and overflowed from our mouths.

Peter's life was on the line. Sanhedrin officials ordered him to shut up about this Jesus he was advocating. But Peter's faith was real as steel. He feared God more than man. "Who should I obey, you fleshly guys whose measly breath is in your nostrils, or the Almighty God who created heaven and earth?"

It makes me think of that scripture:

"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him" (Luke 12:4, 5).

Instead of sitting in an office talking about somebody else's stories, Peter lived out the Christian life. And because he did so, he always had fresh stories to tell. Many people in the Bible and throughout history have literally lost their lives because they chose to live

passionately for God and to stand and testify by going out and living the Christian life instead of telling other people's stories. They lived passionately for Christ and it often cost them their lives—but they always had a story to share because they were out there “gettin’ with it.”

What about you? Maybe you're on a spiritual high. You're out there “gettin’ with it,” testifying about all that Jesus is doing in your life, and reaping some amazing fruit. If so, be humble and thankful. And may this book inspire you to continue to fight the good fight and press on until the Master's return.

For others of you, perhaps you're like the friend to whom I referred, always telling someone else's stories but never your own. Or maybe you find yourself telling stories from ten years ago when you first got saved? Worse case scenario, you don't testify at all.

Brother, sister—whoever you are, wherever you are—my heartfelt prayer is that the stories in this book will shake you to the core. No one can explain away these stories that have happened to me. My hope is that they will inspire you, electrify you, and help you know that, when you have the courage to testify, you are literally rocking Satan's world. And you are bringing hope to people you may not have even realized were at the end of their ropes.

As you read, may the same power fall on you that fell on the seventy-two whom Jesus sent out, two-by-two, into the towns He was about to enter: “The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’ He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven’” (Luke 10:17, 18).

Introduction Questions to Dwell On

- 1) Read **Acts 4:18-20**. How often do you let outside circumstances keep you from testifying? What are some of those circumstances and what steps can you take to overcome them and testify?
- 2) Read **Revelation 2:4, 5a**. People can usually tell what you love most in life just by listening to you talk. Could the people you meet throughout your day accuse you of being in love with Jesus?
- 3) Read **Revelations 12:11**. Lost people will be set free from sin because of Jesus' sacrifice—period! But how will they know unless someone shares that great story? According to this verse, what is the main obstacle we must overcome? (HINT: It's a four letter word that starts with “s,” ends with “t,” and has a lot to do with “you.”)
- 4) Read **Luke 10:17, 18**. According to this verse, when we share our testimony, we defeat Satan and cause him to fall like lightning. Have you ever experienced that? Are you ready to experience it more?

One of my favorite actors is Russell Crowe. In L.A. Confidential, just before he beats a confession out of a corrupt lawyer, Crowe says “Here's the Juice.” It's another way of saying, “This is the deal, and you better get it!” At the conclusion of each chapter, you'll get the juice.

HERE'S THE JUICE:

If you have been saved and set free by Jesus then you have a story to tell. A story that no one can take away because it is something real and supernatural that happened between you and God. That's why Jesus urged people to return to their first love in Revelation 2:4, 5a. He designed your salvation story and the other miracles you've seen Him perform, and there is amazing power in those things! So, go and share and bear good fruit!