

MIND

session page

Can I Get a Witness?

1 Timothy 1:12-17 | Session 8.37

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Begin by asking questions like:

- What is the first thing that would come to mind if someone was to ask you to share your testimony and why?
- To what degree should testimonies, when given, discuss someone's first experiences with faith versus the rest of someone's life and why?
- In what ways are testimonies different from or similar to other accounts of your life that you might share with someone?

Content

Read [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask

- Why do you think that the writer was surprised that God would use Paul and be merciful?
- The writer seems to make a distinction between acting in ignorance, and willfully doing something wrong. Without “chasing rabbits,” what do you think is the difference?
- What power and encouragement does the writer give to Timothy – and to us – by telling about Paul’s experience with Christ?
- When we think of what it means to be “saved,” we can speak both of what we’re saved from and what we are saved for. Based on your knowledge of the early Church, from what was the writer suggesting that Paul was saved?
- For what was the Paul saved?

Closure

Continue by asking:

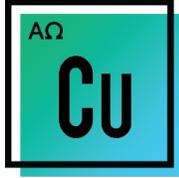
- Why do we often think that God cannot or will not work through us if we commit some sin or make a mistake?
- In what ways can God use our experiences – even our failures and the unfortunate things that happen to us – to speak into others' lives?
- When you think about the stories of others that have given you encouragement and insight, why did their stories speak to you?
- Who might benefit from hearing your story and why?
- Given the way people live and interact in our times, what might be the best way to share your story with someone who needs to hear it, and what can we all do in order to give people an opportunity to do so?

As time permits, invite a couple of volunteers to share testimonies – not only of how they met Christ, but of what Christ has done in their lives since then.

(Note: you may want to warn your volunteers in advance of the session that you are going to do this.)

Encourage the group to spend time writing and praying through their life stories, reflecting on what God has done through the different stages of their lives, in the days and/or weeks ahead, then close with prayer

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Can I Get a Witness?

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Share the story of Miranda Lambert, who wrote "The House that Built Me," [becoming overcome by emotion](#) while she sang it at a concert and ask:

- Miranda seems to be overcome by the story she sees in the audience. Why do you think the audience member felt the need to display that part of his story on a poster for the artist?
- Why do you think it mattered that he let her know about their connection?
- Since telling our stories is part of a Christian practice of witness. What does "witness" mean to you?
- In what ways has it mattered in your faith journey?

Content

Read [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- From what the writer says here, what do you know about Paul's story?
- What in this text would clearly identify Paul, as opposed to some other early Christian figure?
- What descriptive parts of Paul's story from other places in the New Testament are missing from this account, and why do you think the writer chose not to use them?
- In what ways do you think Paul is used as an "example?"
- How, when you hear about someone's experiences, do you recognize God in their stories?

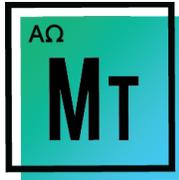
Closure

Share this [video about the Unity project](#) and ask:

- In this video, the identifiers are poles. By what means do we usually see identifiers in our community?
- What are the "poles" that we use as identifiers in churches and why?
- What do you think would have been missing in this story without the identifier poles?
- In what ways does this image remind us of the importance of telling our story and naming the things that identify us?
- The video spoke of how you "could barely see the sky when you look up through the center pole." What does this tell us about sharing our stories?
- What are some other things that we could do in order to show the world that we share so much in common? How might that be helpful?

Pray. Invite the group to a time of prayer, asking them to pray silently about the "poles" in their lives that identify their experiences and how God might have a story to tell through their experience. Pray together to end the session.

Writer: Erin Hall



MYSTIC

session page

Can I Get a Witness?

1 Timothy 1:12-17 | Session 8.37

Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Materials needed: Computer(s), LCD projector, screen.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Read aloud [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#) then play the Bible Background Video.

The following reflection is meant to encourage the participants to become aware of how they feel and what they currently think about their relationships with God, and to articulate it. The following photos invite contemplation that can go in many directions. Make a space for all the many ways that different people might see and interpret them, according to their personal experiences with God. In the last few years, several Bible translation societies have come under fire because of their New Testament translations for Muslims. They're removing "Father" and "Son" language: claiming that many Muslims automatically reject the Christian message because the father-son relationship implies physical union between God the Father and Mary. Once this language is removed, the story has gained more acceptance among some Muslims – reportedly thousands have come to faith because this language was removed.

Reflection

Share the [“30 Great iPhone Photos that Tell Wonderful Stories”](#) site by projecting it on a large screen. If you don't have that capability, you might use a computer screen (or computers, if you have a large group), or print out the photos in advance for sharing.

Invite the group to a silent time of reflection as they view the pictures together, scrolling through the thirty pictures slowly (pausing fifteen seconds for each) three times, as follows:

- First view: ask people to look at the pictures and think about their relationship with God (they can focus on what that relationship has been in the past or the present). Give everyone a minute to center on their relationships before showing the pictures. After the first viewing, ask them to silently consider: “Which picture(s) most caught your attention and why?”
- Second view: ask people to consider which picture they feel best represents some specific aspect of their past or present relationship with God
- Third view: ask people to focus in on the picture that seems to keep their interest and attention the most, in connection with their past or present relationship with God.

Invite people to a personal silent time, guided by the following prompts, pausing two minutes for each:

- Picture in your mind the photo that seemed to be relevant to your relationship with God.
- What about that photo most stands out to you?
- How is that aspect like your relationship with God?
- Share your thoughts/feelings with God
- Listen for a response from God, if any.
- Share your response to God.
- Close the time just resting in the moment.

Invite volunteers to share which picture they chose, and the connection they made between it and their relationship with God. Encourage everyone to listen to each other's stories without "commenting," "fixing," or "advising" anyone, but instead simply receiving what is shared, and keeping the content confidential to this time and place.

Close with prayer

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA
session page

Can I Get a Witness?

1 Timothy 1:12-17 | Session 8.37

Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Play [Neo's First Jump](#) (If you are familiar with the Matrix movies, feel free to elaborate on how Neo become the "one.") and ask questions like:

- What is one of the hardest things you have ever accomplished?
- How many attempts did it take before you were skilled at that task?
- Why were some of the crew so concerned that Neo fell?
- In what ways might it have affected their feelings about Neo being chosen?
- To what degree was Neo doubting himself after falling?

Content

Read [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- In what ways does the writer feel that God gave Paul strength?
- Who do you think that the writer felt that Paul could feel chosen, given on all the mistakes he had made?
- Why do you think the writer paints Paul as feeling to be “the worst sinner?”
- Why do you think that the writer of this passage was so focused on the mercy that Paul was shown?
- In what ways does this passage speak to the way God views us?
- What does this passage suggest about God’s plans for us and why?

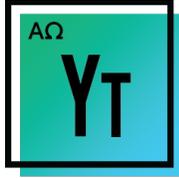
Closure

Play the [Benjamin Watson video](#) and ask:

- If you had gone through the injury time that Benjamin went through, how would you feel?
- When have you felt like you let God and others down?
- Why do we, or others, expect us to be perfect in our faith?
- In what ways has God’s grace shown itself to truly bigger than your failures?
- Where might your story of accomplishments and failure communicate God’s love to others in the coming days?

Close in prayer.

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH

session page

Can I Get a Witness?

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Obtain a stick or ruler to use as a pointing device (see Context)
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.

Intro

Play the [Skit Guys video](#) and ask questions like:

- What did you think of the witnessing examples given in this video and why?
- What are some of the bad ways you have experienced people sharing their faith and how did they affect you?
- What would you say is the most effective way to share your faith with someone else and why?

Context

Select four or five volunteers and tell them that they are going to tell a story as a group. You will need some kind of stick or ruler to use as a pointer. Have one person start a story about a random subject that you will give them. They will need to continue telling their story while you point at them. Whenever you point at someone else, that person has to continue the story in place of the previous speaker. If you have a competitive group, you might want to eliminate anyone who does not make a seamless transition in the story, encouraging those watching to decide if someone is eliminated.

Play several rounds, or until all the volunteers have had at least one chance to continue the story, then stop and ask questions like:

- In what ways was this activity easy or difficult?
- What was the secret of continuing the story?
- What made for a good versus bad story?
- What would have happened if you were not listening to the story being told?
- In what ways did people try to change the story when it was your turn to speak and why?
- As audience members, if all you knew about these volunteers was the stories you heard them tell, what impressions would you have of them or their message and why?

Content

Read [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- What reasons did the writer give for Paul to believe he had been a terrible person?
- What does it say about God that Paul was given mercy and grace, despite his past?
- For what purpose does the writer proclaim that Paul was given mercy?
- In what ways might using a personal story helped the writer present a good witness?

Closure

Form pairs and have them sit facing each other. Ask the following questions one at a time giving people time to share their answer with their partner before proceeding to the next question.

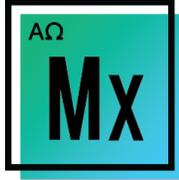
- How do you feel about the role of faith in your life and why?
- Who is the most influential spiritual person in your life, and why would you choose that person?
- When have you failed at something so badly that it took you some time to overcome it and what have you learned from the experience?
- Since faith is something that grows in all of us throughout our lives, in ten years, in what way do you hope to see yourself as a person of faith and why?

Bring the large group back together and ask:

- Why do you think it is so important for us to share our personal faith stories?
- In what ways might your own story help you be better at reaching others?
- What do you think is the most important message that your personal experiences might teach someone else and why?

Close this session in prayer

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX

session page

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Context (From the Current Session Page)

Share the story of Miranda Lambert, who wrote "The House that Built Me," [becoming overcome by emotion](#) while she sang it at a concert and ask:

- Miranda seems to be overcome by the story she sees in the audience. Why do you think the audience member felt the need to display that part of his story on a poster for the artist?
- Why do you think it mattered that he let her know about their connection?
- Since telling our stories is part of a Christian practice of witness. What does "witness" mean to you?
- In what ways has it mattered in your faith journey?

Content (From the Mind Session Page)

Read [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask

- Why do you think that the writer was surprised that God would use Paul and be merciful?
- The writer seems to make a distinction between acting in ignorance, and willfully doing something wrong. Without “chasing rabbits,” what do you think is the difference?
- What power and encouragement does the writer give to Timothy – and to us – by telling about Paul’s experience with Christ?
- When we think of what it means to be “saved,” we can speak both of what we’re saved from and what we are saved for. Based on your knowledge of the early Church, from what was the writer suggesting that Paul was saved?
- For what was the Paul saved?

Closure (from the Media Session page)

Play the [Benjamin Watson video](#) and ask:

- If you had gone through the injury time that Benjamin went through, how would you feel?
- When have you felt like you let God and others down?
- Why do we, or others, expect us to be perfect in our faith?
- In what ways has God’s grace shown itself to truly bigger than your failures?
- Where might your story of accomplishments and failure communicate God’s love to others in the coming days?

Close in prayer.