

For the Love of the Family Ministries

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

Testimony of Failing To Witness

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Dear friends of For the Love of the Family,

Have you ever been afraid of sharing your faith with someone or thought what you said did not matter? I hope you will find the testimony below a blessing and an encouragement. If it is an encouragement to you feel free to let us know. New items are being added to the web site at www.fortheloveofthefamily.com. I would encourage to look and see what God is doing.

Best Regards in Him,
Pastor Coomer

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Failing to Witness

By Dr. Terry L. Coomer

Recently, I shared my personal testimony of salvation with the people who receive articles from For the Love of the Family Ministries. I was saved in 1974 after coming home in the off season as a professional baseball player for the San Francisco Giants. About one year after I was saved, God called me to preach.

I was faithful in my local church, and my wife Kim and I ran a bus route and had opportunity to witness to many people and see them saved in the first year after we got saved.

However, God was about to teach me a very important lesson which I would not soon forget. I find that many people do not witness to others about Christ because they are afraid to witness. They are scared of what the other person will say or think of them or what it might cost them.

By playing professional baseball, my wife and I were living on a lake in a new house and we had a new sports car, boat, and a motorcycle. We had everything we had ever wanted in life at a very early age. We were 19 when we got married and we were both 19 when we got saved. God was very gracious to us.

Even though I was saved, and was being aggressive about sharing my faith and had seen others come to know the Savior, I failed to witness to someone who God had spoke to my heart about witnessing to.

The salvation of a soul, someone coming to know Christ as Savior, is precious in the eyes of God. Bro. John Bishop a while back gave me a book that really touched my heart. Bro. John, a few years back had spinal meningitis and lost his memory and has labored for the Lord in much physical pain. He now tries to minister to those who are hurting. One of John's favorite sayings is "God is good all the time".

The book Bro. John gave me is a book about a girl who grew up in an orphanage and no one ever told her they loved her her whole life. I cried as I read the book, and I read about the abuse she received and the filthy way she had to live. When she was 13 a Christian youth group came to the orphanage. A Christian teenager was going out the door leaving the orphanage after their performance, and said to the children in the orphanage, "Remember God loves you". For this little girl this was the first time anyone had ever told her that anyone loved her. She was having a hard time comprehending the concept. She finally went into a room by herself. She had on old tattered clothes with an old tattered sweater. She sat down on a chair, put her head in her hands, and tears came to her eyes and she said, "God if you really are there and you love me I will receive you now". She was born again that day.

Later as she was continually abused, rejected, and hurt by people the Holy Spirit continued to minister to her heart in all the pain and loneliness she was in in her life and God let her know that if no one else loved her He did. God ministered to her life in many ways and helped her through these most difficult times with His sustaining love. Maybe you are hurting today and you need help. I Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you". I wrote something in my Bible several years ago, "when you pray tell God everything that is on your heart, tell him everything". I have found that to help me when I hurt.

The church today has many programs, but salvation is still a work of the Spirit of God. The Christian young lady who said, "Remember, God loves you", probably never gave her words a second thought. She may have even been thinking this was a youth outing and something for all of us to do. However, her words meant it all to this poor abused lonely little girl.

We never know how God will use our words to minister to those who are hurt, abused, or in need. When I read this story, I thought of how many times we are too busy, or too self absorbed, or really don't care for the lost and needy person around us. In our community we have many poor, abused, and lonely children. After reading this book over the last year we have a ministry to these children in our church. Yes, it takes work, and we have many disappointments, but we also have seen many of these children come to know the Lord.

The Lord taught me an important lesson very early in my Christian life. When God called me to preach He also led me to Tennessee Temple University. I had only been saved a year when I left to go to Bible College and Kim and I did not grow up in a Christian home. We had a lot to learn. Prior to going to Tennessee Temple, I had to get a physical from my doctor. Now folks, my doctor was a young successful doctor, and I remember thinking, I really like this guy's Corvette!

When I went in, I was sitting in the examining room. Immediately, the Holy Spirit starting speaking to me about witnessing to Dr. Short. We had had conversations in the past and he thought it was cool that I was a professional baseball player. What a great opportunity to tell him about what God had done in my life. Normally, a doctor comes in is less than personal and has to get on to the next patient. Short, sweet, (not always) direct and to the point. Dr. Short walked in and immediately said, "Wow I like your shirt". I had a silk shirt on. Most ball players spent a lot of money on clothes and I did. He asked me where I got the shirt, how much it cost? I was a young Christian. All the time the Holy Spirit says "Witness to this man".

Dr. Short left the room to get some sample medicine for me as I had a touch of bronchitis. While he was gone, I had a conversation with God. I spoke out loud, and argued with God. (Have you ever done anything like that?) I said, Lord he won't listen to me, he is a doctor". God said, "Tell him about me". I said Lord, "I will leave him a tract here on this table and he will read it". I failed to witness because of fear. Who is the author of fear? Not God. I Timothy 1:7 says, "God hath not given us a Spirit of fear". I failed that day at the task that is so important to the heart of God. I brushed it off and went on. After all I was on my way to be a preacher. (Really makes you ashamed doesn't it).

About a month later I was in Chattanooga, TN starting my education at Tennessee Temple University. My mother called me and we talked for about 30 minutes on the phone. At the end of the conversation, almost as an after thought, she said, "By the way, I do not know if you know this or not, your doctor, Dr. Short, he was killed last Friday night in a car accident. He was driving his Corvette late at night at a high rate of speed and missed a curve." Immediately, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart. I got off the phone immediately and went to the bed room and asked God to forgive me for my failure to witness as God had commanded me to do, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15. I wept that night over my disobedience and my sin and the soul of the man who God had put me in the position to talk with.

I promised God that I would always take the opportunity and listen to Him in these matters from that day forward. You know, I hope Dr. Short read that tract, I left, but I doubt he did. These two illustrations I have given so much emphasize how important our witnessing can be in the lives of people.

Maybe as you are reading this, you are tired and feeling down about your witnessing to others. Don't be discouraged. Ask God to use your life in the lives of others. Don't be concerned about the big splash, or even what others are or aren't doing, but remember that God wants to use you to share his love with others.

I believe that many times we fail to understand that witnessing is all about caring, and caring is all about having a real, intimate, personal, passionate relationship with the Savior. Every day as a part of my devotional life, when I read my Bible in the morning and spend time with God. I ask God several questions. One of those is, Lord who do you want me to witness to today? Another is, Lord who do you want me to encourage today? Getting direction from God in our witnessing and encouragement areas means I am not thinking about me but submitting to Him. Think about it! Remember, God does not want you or me to be afraid, but to be obedient and submissive to Him.

Dr. Terry L. Coomer is the Pastor of Elwood Bible Baptist Church, and the Director of For the Love of the Family Ministries. He has also served as the Publisher of the nation's fastest growing daily newspaper. Pastor Coomer holds Family Conferences in the local church. To have a meeting at your church or other needs he may be contacted at (765) 552-1973, tlcoomer@juno.com. There are many helpful articles and material on our web site to help you change your life at www.fortheloveofthefamily.com. We serve the God of answers. If you need help finding those answers you may contact us at tlcoomer@juno.com. To be removed from our mailing list send an e-mail to tlcoomer@juno.com.