

THE PATTERN SEEN IN PASTOR BISSOL'S TESTIMONY
THE PATTERN OF HAVING A BIBLICAL TESTIMONY
3-13-16

I Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

I Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

I Timothy 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

As I was praying about what to share this morning, I got a call from Ken Knapp. He said, "Did you know that Keith Emerson died?" I said, "No I didn't." Keith Emerson was the Keyboard player from Emerson Lake And Palmer, a famous Rock and Roll Group in the 70's. Ken was a facebook friend of Keith Emerson, and apparently received a notice that he was found dead of a gunshot wound to the head. I immediately thought he must have committed suicide. Then later it was confirmed that he had shot himself. About 1 year earlier Ken said he thought it strange that he received a notice that Keith Emerson said that he could no longer Post on facebook. Then Ken said a lot of people commit suicide because of drug abuse.. I said.. I don't think so. But it sounds like to me Emerson probably had some health issues that he could not deal with .. Later as the story progressed..

Ken called and Apparently what happened is that it was surmised that Emerson had 'recently' been suffering from depression and a degenerative nerve issue that hampered his keyboard playing capabilities. You see, to someone like this, losing their ability is like death itself.. According to our sources he could only play the keyboard with 8 fingers at this point and knew it was only going to get worse. As a result, he was struggling with depression and then no doubt committed suicide.

Recently Peter Accardi asked me if I would dedicate a message to sharing my personal testimony. In light of this recent suicide.. I thought it good to share what happened to me, because when I got saved in 1974 Keith Emerson was at the height of his career. And in 1974 when I got saved there were a lot of musicians who were committing suicide, usually through drug overdoses. This news caused me to immediately think of this verse:

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

In 1974 there was no person that was held in higher esteem as a musician and keyboard player than Keith Emerson... So as a non Christian unsaved young musician.. I looked up to him.. but traded that admiration, emulation and awe for the Lord Jesus Christ ...NOW 42 years later.. this great Icon of the music industry ends his life by taking a gun and shooting himself..

Which tells me ... in 1974 I made the right decision. Could I attain to any higher position than this legend.. BUT WHAT TESTIMONY DOES THIS ROCK STAR LEAVE AS HE EXITS THIS

WORLD.. HE ENDS HIS LIFE BECAUSE TO HIM IF HE COULD NOT PLAY MUSIC ANY MORE.. HIS LIFE WAS WORTHLESS AND ENDED ANYWAY..

So let me introduce my message this morning by saying that 42 years ago I made the right decision. This sad story illustrates so many of my contemporaries unfortunately did not.

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

THE PATTERN OF PAUL SEEN IN PASTOR BISSOL'S TESTIMONY

7-27-02

THE GOOD PATTERN OF EVERY TESTIMONY THE PATTERN SEEN IN PASTOR BISSOL'S TESTIMONY

I Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

I Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

I Timothy 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Everyone who has truly been saved, born again by the spirit of Christ, could look at how the Lord dealt with them and worked in their lives, and say the same thing about what happened to them that the Apostle Paul said about his conversion. The Apostle Paul said.

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul said.. that his life and his testimony would go down in church history as a prime example of a PATTERN TO OTHERS WHO WOULD BELIEVE ..

In fact I had never read that verse, but the day I was converted to Christ, I called Peter Accardi and said, "I think the same thing that happened to you happened to me.. " What I saw was the pattern of a conversion. In fact this pattern can be seen in everyones life who is truly converted to Christ.

Today I am going to share that pattern and give my testimony of an example of how this all works..

FIRST

- I. The Pattern of what you were before you knew the Lord..
- II. The Pattern of God seeking you out...
- III. The Pattern of the day God called you to himself...

- IV. The Pattern of forsaking your way for the Lord's
- V. The Pattern of a call in your life to follow the Lord
- VI. The Pattern of being faithful unto death..

***I. Consider the Pattern of What I Was Before Salvation
That life is a life aimed at self gratification and alienation from God***

I Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Paul said.. he was a blasphemer..
He was a persecutor of the church
He was injurious to the cause of Christ

If you have experienced a conversion .. then at one time you were not valuable to the cause of Christ but after your conversion you were profitable...

Say,,,, preacher I grew up in the church... no matter.. just because you grew up in the church does not mean that you were profitable for the Lord's work..

Before I was saved, I was worthless and injurious to the cause of Christ.

I was raised Roman Catholic, but like almost all Italian boys .. I went to church as a young boy.. I was raised in Hazelton and went to Catechism. I remember the nuns telling stories about how we needed to be faithful to the church. I was taught there were certain sins that were mortal sins.. and certain sins were venial sins.. If you committed a mortal sin and died without going to confession and having these sins absolved and forgiven you would go straight to hell. Mortal sins were outlined, and we were severely warned not to commit these sins. Then there was first Holy Communion. I lived in Hazelton when I took first Holy Communion, then as you get older.. it seems most young Italian boys and men start slipping from the church. I remember we moved to Levittown and I was shocked to find out most people were not Catholic. I thought everyone was Catholic. My family took me back to Hazelton.. HOLY LAND.. to be confirmed...

I was told by a nun that I needed to pick a middle name that was from one of the saints as a patron saint when I was confirmed. I didn't have a legal middle name - that was saved for Holy Confirmation.. As I thought through names, I tried out a middle initial..

Frank A Bissol ...
Frank B Bissol,
Frank C Bissol
Frank D Bissol
Frank E Bissol ..

That was it.. Everyone called me Frankie.. So I wouldn't have to change a thing.. Frank (e) Bissol.. Than I looked for a Patron Saint whose name started with an E I had a friend named Eddie.. so I said to the nun is there a saint Edward.. She said Son.. there is a saint everything. So I said I was to be confirmed after saint Edward.. but I was really thinking of my buddy Eddie I liked him..

Like all little Italian boys it was tradition for the parents to give their boys music lessons. So my dad bought my brother and I an Accordion while I was in Hazelton.. and my brother and I both learned the accordion..

I never had a great attention span and couldn't read music very well.. but used to just just like playing around on the accordion.. I liked what I played better than playing all those dots on the paper.. I guess later I found out that that was playing by ear!

I don't know what got into me one day.. but I remember while practicing the accordion in Hazelton, I got thinking about the devil.. and started to get mad at the devil.. So I put my accordion down, and told the devil I was going to beat him up.. so I started swinging at the air.. That afternoon I beat up the devil and then took up my accordion and finished practicing.

Well, my family moved to Levittown and my brother quit playing but I kept playing the accordion for some reason. My parents asked if I wanted to quit and for some reason I said no.

Every summer I got to visit my grandparents for about a month in the summer. I would take my accordion with me.. I was about 11-12 years old and my cousin who lived next door to my Grandparents was starting a little combo band and asked me to bring my accordion over and play some music with them. I did that and my cousin and his buddies just thought I played great. (NOT SURE WHY?) My cousin took me to a music store and said Frank you should get a combo organ to play you'd do far better and I think you would be great at it..

That was the start for me to have a deeper interest in music. When I got home after that vacation I asked my parents to buy me a combo organ so I would play in a band.. When I started the 7th grade I meet some friends in school who also had a small band and played parties and weddings and they invited me to play with them.. When I was just 12-13 for some reason I decided that I wanted to be a professional musician and I started to become serious about music.. I even wrote a list of things I wanted to accomplish in my carrier..

I wrote down on that paper I wanted a Van to carry my equipment around and I wrote I wanted To own such and such equipment to play out..

I wrote I wanted to be playing full time by time time I graduated High School

I wrote I wanted to make a professional recording someday.. have a record out...

I wanted to go to college for music

I wanted to own a nightclub bar...

I begged my parents to get me a portable organ so I would play in bands and in time they did.

One of these bands used to go to a place called Clyde Peters in Levittown area to rehearse and learn to play better. and that is where I met Peter Accardi; he was one of the instructors at the store.

When I was 15 years old I begged my parents to buy me a Hammond Organ and then a van to move the organ around. By time I was 16 I was playing in nightclubs in the Philadelphia area.. In the summer after my Junior High days a friend took me to Peter Accardi's house because he was looking for musicians for his new band.. It was at this meeting that I decided to leave a Trio that I was playing in.. to join Peter's Band.. I had a nice cargo van to move my equipment and had a nice Hammond Organ .. and now was playing full time with a professional group.

When I was about to graduate from High school I decided this would be my life.. and I was going to live my dream..

It was then that I was about to graduate High School .. we had a graduation class of over 1000 students that year and as I sat in the main stairway of the school watching the mass of students going by, I looked around trying to figure out what everyone would be doing in a few years. I thought to myself who would be the politicians? who would be the doctors & lawyers? Who would be the Clergy, Priests etc ? Than I looked around trying to figure out who the priests and clergy.. I wondered.. if it would be this one that one.. than I thought how about me. And then I laughed to myself and said.. NOT ME! I had my little list and I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my life.

I had already applied to a local college to be a music major and was playing full time in night clubs throughout the area. I felt my life was set in stone all I needed know was to work out the details.

So little by little I started to see everything on my little list come to pass!

All was going according to plan.. After I graduated from high school we recorded our first Album at Sigma Sound Studios in Philadelphia. I had to miss the first day of college because we were booked in Philadelphia to record our first album.

While we were on tour in Florida .. I went into a convenience store and was joking with other Band members... walking through the aisles I looked for something to read.. We had some time off so I saw a booklet entitled "I'm Bored" I said to one of our Band members.. Jokingly.. I'm going to buy this..

I took it to the register and the cashier could not find a price .. so they just charged me a quarter.. When I got back to the Motel room I took out the booklet and started to read it.. It talked about how things in your life you may find boring, how people can bore you, how maybe you can't find real substance to anything in life.. It talked about how you may find that all people want to talk about is themselves and that bores you. How everything in life seems vain and lacks meaning. and then it said.. the answer is to give your heart and life to Jesus Christ.. I immediately threw the booklet down .. and yelled.. It was tricked.. This is a religious tract.. No wonder the clerk could not find a price for it and I bought the stupid booklet!

FROM MY REACTION TO THIS BOOKLET
SO CAN YOU SEE.. I DID NOT HAVE THE LORD IN MY HEART..
I DID NOT LOVE THE LORD..
I WAS NOT SEEKING THE LORD..

While we were in Florida I remember coming home one night after a concert and I remember Peter Accardi blaspheming God.. I thought that out of character for Peter .. and then as we talk about those years gone by Peter reminded me that he got deathly sick that night. Again, neither I nor Peter were seeking the Lord. Unknown to me God was working in Peter's life and God was working in my life to draw me to Himself.

Paul was highly motivated to be successful in his life.. in fact, he was highly successful in his religious career.. Yet he was not saved!

If you asked me about God.. I would tell you I believed in God and prayed every night for God to bless me in my career.. Yet when I got that tract I cursed and threw it down..

This pattern must be there, in fact Paul said..

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Paul claimed to be the chief of sinners... for a person to be saved they need to see themselves as chief of sinners. If I were the only sinner in the world it would still have taken Jesus to die on the cross to save me.

HERE IS THE PATTERN..

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;

I was doing my thing..
I was going my way..
I was lost..

Part of the process of true conversion is seeing yourself as God sees you..

If you are saying ... well, I was not such a bad person before I got saved... it may be you never got saved...

One preacher said it this way... "no conviction no conversion..."

Every person will see themselves as the chief of sinners..

Paul said I was..

THIS IS A PATTERN...

I was running from God.. doing my own thing..

When my family had a wedding they often asked me to play the music in Church I said no.. I said I don't play that kind of music..

As time progressed our Band became more and more popular.. we got some air play of our record.. and were planning to record a second Album.. While we were playing a large club my dad came to see our band. It was then that I put a suggestion in my dads mind to get out of the Barber business and buy a nightclub like the one we were playing at... In about a year My Dad actually sold his Barber Shop business and bought the Mill Creek Inn. Which was about 1/2 mile from our house in Levittown PA... EVERYTHING ON MY LIST WAS COMING TO PASS..

Everything right on schedule..

I FOUND MY LIFE.. AND I WAS DOING WHAT I WANTED TO DO..

II. THERE IS THE PATTERN OF GOD SEEKING US OUT DRAWING US

I Timothy 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

Acts 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts 9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

Acts 9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

Acts 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

It is a supernatural thing how the Lord works in every one of our lives to save us.... Sometimes it is through trials that He brings us through..

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Sometimes.. he knocks us off our high horse..

Myself.... I was running from God... but did not even know it..

In Florida picked up a tract and threw it down..

Then I was about to graduate from Jr College.. and needed to decide if I was going to go on to pursue a bachelors degree in music..

Now there was only one problem. I could not go on to further studies and keep playing full time in the band. I could at the local college level but not when I transferred.

So I sat down with Peter and told him about my dilemma and how I needed to make a decision.

Peter said to me "Frank.. this is my life, you know that. If you decide to leave I will keep going but if you stay you know we have great things ahead of us because I am never going to quit doing what I am doing.. "

I went home and thought about it.. There was only one person that loved what he was doing more than me. That was Peter.. I really wasn't even into playing as much as he was. I was more down to earth about what I did. but Peter.. to him he was on the stage 24 hours a day. His whole life was a stage.

I thought about it. I knew what I would need to do to go on to college.. it was going to be tough, intense studies, and the truth is it was far more pleasurable to play in the band.. So I decided

to revamp my whole college schedule take as many performance credits as I could and decided I would go ahead record our second Album and do the tour of California with the Band..

It was not long after, maybe a few months, that Peter called me on the phone and said he needed to meet with everyone in the Band..

When I got there he told us what I thought was an outlandish story about how he meet a man in a motel room that could read everyone's minds.. and threatened to kill him if he didn't join his cult. Then Peter said he went home and prayed and the Lord changed his life as he remembered back to a verse he learned in Sunday School years ago.. He was a different person and claimed to be SAVED... He said he was through with everything and now he wanted to live for the LORD... He kept talking about Jesus, what He did, and how Jesus came into his heart..

We just shook our heads in disbelief and couldn't understand.. and we all just left.. Speechless.. We tried to tell him that maybe he needed to just sleep it off maybe he just took a bad drug etc.

After that, the drummer, the Bass player, and I went to talk about what we were going to do. I remember ... my exact words were this. Either Peter is the biggest con artist in the world and has something up his sleeve.. or GOD REALLY DID CHANGE HIS LIFE.. Then I said time will tell..

These were almost the exact words of Gamaliel in Acts 5:38

Acts 5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

Acts 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Obviously, I suspected it was just the work of men with PETER.. So I went back to talk to Peter a few days later and decided I would try and talk him out of what he thought he had. In college I was taught that Christianity was just a synthesis of all kind of ancient cults combined into one. We had learned about ancient cults and myths that sounded a lot like Christianity .. we learned about how the "Church" borrowed from ancients myths of mystery cults that talked about a woman and saviour child . I had all these arguments.. When I got to Peter's house it was about 10 at night .. When I got there he had his old Sunday School teacher Carl Shanosk, who was also a deacon from his church there.

We talked to about 5 in the morning.. Basically, after I vented with all my ammunition from my liberal college.. Peter and Carl turned around and said Frank all that you say is interesting but none of it is Bible. **Have you ever read the Bible? I replied NO.. they said let us show you what the Bible says.**

So they proceeded to give me the plan of salvation starting in Genesis and ending in Revelation. Carl talked about the prophecy of Gen 3:16, they talked about Prophecies that predicted the crucifixion, they talked about the resurrection, they talked about the Rapture, the coming Kingdom, the church and the great commission. They shared how only through the work of Jesus Christ can we be save not by works of righteousness.. etc..

By 5 AM I understood what it was to be saved. At the end of it all I said.. I can't believe that this is so simple. Do you mean all a person would have to do to be saved and go to heaven is receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, Believe in their heart and that is it? They said yes.

I said, if that is the case what kind of person would I be if I didn't tell everyone about this?

They said.. Yes that is why we are telling you. Frank let's pray. So they prayed and then asked me to pray and ask Jesus into my heart. I actually started to shake. I was under such conviction. I didn't pray to get saved.. But I actually said in my HEART.. OH GOD GET ME OUT OF HERE.. Do you know I prayed not to get saved!!!

You see I knew in my mind the plan
But in my heart I was afraid to get saved. You see I found my life..

Do you know the Bible gives fear as the number one reason people will not get saved..

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

My life was my career and I knew that if that same thing that happened to Peter would happen to me I was going to be through with my career just like he was.

I FOUND MY LIFE.. AND WAS ON MY WAY UP IN THE WORLD.. I THOUGHT..
I HAD OTHER PLANS..

What would my friends think?

What would my family think?

Also I found it hard to believe people were that bad.

I really did not want to believe my family and friends were headed to hell.

I really did not want to believe I was that bad to deserve hell..

What would I do.. My livelihood, everything, was wrapped up in my little grocery list of things I wanted to accomplish..

I said either something really happened to Peter or else he is a con artist and has something up his sleeve. Time will tell.

I went back to college after Peter and Carl witnessed to me.. they asked me if I ever read the Bible I said no.. but they never gave me a Bible.. As I was walking through the hallways of college that week someone handed me a book out of the clear blue.. IT WAS OF ALL THINGS A BIBLE.. It totally spooked me.. Later I found out that Gideons go to colleges and give out these green New Testaments.. to college students. I took and when I got home I hid it in my sock drawer.. By the way it was the same drawer where I had my little list of goals for my life.. I even tried to read it but couldn't get heads or tails out of it..

We decided to try and find another member for the band and go on. We did that for about 6 months but I decided that we were set back too far and I decided to just take a year off and try to prepare for college entrance exams and go on with my studies..

THERE IS A PATTERN..

Paul said..

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

When the Lord finally got Paul's attention on the road to Damascus he said to him ..

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

I didn't know the Lord and he started to prick me with goads.. to get my attention.

HERE IS THE PATTERN OF SALVATION ..
THE SAME THING THAT HAPPENED TO PAUL HAPPENED TO ME..
THE SAME THING THAT HAPPENED TO PETER ACCARDI HAPPENED TO ME..

God knocked me off my high horse and got my attention..

What were the pricks the Lord put in my side..

After I decided to leave the Band and just prepare for college.. I stopped making money ... Previous to this at one point when my dad had his barber shop I was making almost as much money playing the clubs as he made. I was only 16, 17, 18, years old.. now I was 20 years old and not working..

My dad was not going to let me be a lazy college bum.. which you almost have to be to be a music major. SO GOD WAS BRINGING PRICKS AND STABBING ME WITH GOADS..

One day my dad came into my little music room and cursed me out and said. you are not going to be a bum.. and said as long as I was living in the house I could come down to the bar and bar tend!

That was the best thing my dad could ever do for me..

You see all these years I saw one side of the bar life. where everyone was my friend.. everyone loved me.. and applauded me. Now behind the bar I was the long haired hippy freak that did not fit in. These were rough tough steel mill workers who worked hard for a living and they weren't always kind to me or anyone else. I saw a side to the business I was in that was completely different from the glamour and lights I was used to.

As a bartender I really noticed how liquor would affect someone and transform them into a monster.. It really was often referred to SPIRITS.. but not a good spirit..

In fact late at night in the bar I would fall asleep in the back after 2AM.. I was too tired to go home, my dad had put a piano in the back room for me to practice and when it got late I had a blanket and pillow I would just lay behind a second bar .. As I slept there often, I would open my eyes and see horrible faces looking down at me.. I would wake up and swing at them.. I am

convinced today that what I was seeing was the evil spirits that inhabit places where liquor and drugs predominate.

THERE IS A PATTERN..

All this was to draw Frank Bissol to himself..

III. *THERE IS A Pattern of the day God called me to himself..*

There must be a time.

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

There must be a pattern of surrender to the Lord..

We need to say LORD WHAT WILL YOU HAVE ME TO DO?

It was about this time that I met another musician a fellow by the name of Danny DeGennaro. He came over one day to jam and play some music, and he told me about a guy by the name of Ronnie Butko. He said we ought to get together and play some music. I told him I was through playing in bands and was preparing to go to college for music.

Danny said let's get together. I said ok.. so we got together at a party and played some music together. Suddenly, I found myself doing what I knew I should not do.. Getting involved in another Rock and Roll band.

Danny was extremely talented, so was Ronnie.. but I was convinced all musicians were nuts... In my mind either they were going to either OD on drugs or OD on Jesus.. or who knows what else they would do.

I surmised that in a few years the technology would advance so much that one man could make all the music you could imagine all by himself. All I had to do was go to college and wait it out. However, there was one problem. Waiting it out was no fun. AND SIN IS FUN FOR A SEASON..

I found myself doing the very thing I thought I never would do.. playing in another rock and roll band.. I called Tony Messina the agent that we had with Peter Accardi, and he started to promote this new band.

God was working in my life behind the scenes.. I found out quickly that having a bar was not as glamorous as I thought it was. God was working in my heart behind the scenes. I kept thinking about this thing called salvation.

I reasoned.. either what Carl and Peter told me was true or it was a lie. If it is true I am headed to hell.. It was hard for me to reject all that they said... because many things I knew were true. So I just reasoned that a loving God could never send people to hell. My buddies are basically good..

But being a bartender really contradicted what I believed almost every day and almost all the time. People really are a mess and all the drinking does is bring it to the surface.

It is hard to kick against the pricks..

This new band I had with Danny DeGenarro and Ronnie Butko was probably the most dynamic band I was ever in.. We had all the right ingredients. Each one of us were song writers, we had tight vocal harmonies, but Danny was a druggie, always high, He also, I believe, was dealing in drugs. At one point Ronnie and I agreed to kick him out of the band hoping it would wake him up. It didn't and we brought him back.

Our manager one day called me to lend out some microphones to a vocal group that was singing at Fort Dix. Tony called and said it was an emergency so I hurried over, brought the mics, and sat there that evening listening to what at one time was a group that had multiple hit records in the early 60's late 50's. As I sat there with Tony I saw soldiers take ice cubes out of their drinks and throw the ice cubes at the singers.

Again God was speaking to my heart. I thought to myself in 20 years would this be me?

I went to college one day and asked my Jazz Professor, whose life was music, what he would do if he were in a plane wreck and stranded on an island somewhere and didn't have his horn, so he could no longer play music - what would he do? He said he could sing... I thought to myself.. that was ridiculous.. he sang terribly! He was a master Jazz Trumpeter

There were drugs all around me and you could not possibly be in that environment and not at the least smoke pot.. I just concluded, if I continued in the lifestyle that I was part of .. I probably would die young. In the early 70's I counted about 30 rock stars that died early deaths between 1970 – 1974.

There was no doubt in my mind that sooner or later everything on my little list would come to fruition. Some of it was already there.. all I needed was the notoriety and a hit record.

I started getting real close to our manager Tony.. One day I was talking to my Manager Tony Messina and I said Tony what can you do for us .. He laughed and said.. it is not what I am going to do for you that is important... it is what your going to do for .. me.. You are going to make me rich. That's what's important. I just laughed..

There was no doubt in my mind about the success.. But how long that would last was another question. Also how long I would live to enjoy it was another question.

So here is what I concluded. I would be successful..

I probably would live a short life..

Worse than live a short life.. I may lose my success before I die which would be worse than death..

WHICH BRINGS ME TO OUR TEXT ONCE AGAIN..

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it:

As I was thinking on all this.. which I let on to no one. if there a God.. was Peter right.. I even was wondering if people just liked me because of my music.. and if I lost the mystique of being in their eyes a star.. I would be nothing.. on and on .. I despised the way people acted when they were drunk..

About this time I had a friend who introduced me to a friend of his who had a large house where our band could rehearse. It was sometimes a challenge to find a large enough place to house all our equipment. One night after rehearsal the owner of the house .. her name was Barbara.. asked to talk to me alone. We went into a pottery room she had and she closed the door and said Frank I have something I need to talk to you about. I said sure.. what's up.

She said I want you to know that I just asked Jesus Christ into my heart and I am a different person now. I am trying to straighten out my life .. I am seeking to get my kids back and can't have the band over any more. So you will have to find another place to rehearse.

When she said that.. it was like someone snapped my mind..
I thought.. does she know what I'm thinking?
Is this a conspiracy?
Does she know Peter Accardi?
Is she a witch?

I did not let on that I was in total shock.. and said sure.. and as we left..

Just then as we were leaving I asked Ronnie Butko to go back and talk to Barbara.. I suspected she was a maybe what they call a white witch and she was trying to blow my mind.. She didn't know Peter.. this had to be a trick.. she was playing with my mind.. I was sure of it..

Then I asked Ronnie to go back and talk to her. Because Ronnie understood some of this stuff .. He actually was born on Halloween.. So he knew more about these things than me. So I said.. Ronnie I think Barbara is a Witch can you go back with me and check her out.. He said all right .. I said now you can tell if she's a witch, right? He said I can find out.

So we went back and I said Barbara, Ronnie wants to talk to you for a little while. So Ronnie went to talk to her.. he talked about Pyramids, and zodiac signs and this and that.. I stayed a little distance because I wasn't even interested in that stuff.. Then Ronnie said Ok Frankie let's go..

So we got in his Volkswagen beetle and I said what do you think Ronnie.. He looked at me and said.. SHE AIN'T NO WITCH, and smiled..

My heart sunk and I didn't say it but thought it.. OH NO IT'S WORSE.. SHE IS REALLY SAVED AND THIS IS GOD!!!

It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks .. I just wonder what God was doing in Paul's life before he was converted only he and the Lord know!

It was shortly after this that my little sister was getting married. I really was worried about the fellow she was marrying. I had heard through the grapevine that he was involved in drugs. I sat them down before they got married and asked my sister if she really wanted to marry this guy. She laughed but I think I was about to get into a fist fight. Nevertheless .. The got married.

The family asked me to book a band for the wedding which I did. I had a friend that had a small wedding band .. that I booked and told them make sure they get there early because if they didn't they won't have any place to set up.

After the ceremony we came to my parents bar and the place was packed out.. and my buddy's band had not showed up.. I went outside and told them that they were late and there was no place to set up. I had told them to make sure they got there early to set up. The crowd overflowed onto the dance floor.

My buddy said he came all that way and wanted to be paid .. I argued with him and said it's their fault.. I was trying to be nice.. when my dad came out and said what is going on. I said Dad my buddy got here late and I told him he has to wait till the people eat and then set up .. but he said he can't stay and wants to be paid.. Just then my dad said some things I can't repeat and my buddy said. Well out of the goodness of my heart I took this gig .. and then I blew and said it was out of the goodness of your pocket book....

I think God was shattering my philosophy that all people are basically good.

Folks I can't begin to tell you all that was going on in my mind and heart about this time.. There was so much confusion at that wedding.. there was an open bar and people were coming in from off the street to crash the wedding.. The family asked me to play a song on the piano.. I did.. and it could hardly be heard for all the noise, but one of my aunts who had not heard me play since I was a kid looked at me and said Boy, Frankie, you really got good .. and then she said.. "I hate you for it.. " what she meant was that she envied me.. but because of all that was going on .. it just was not the right thing to say with my mindset. Because in my mind I often wondered if people only loved me for my music and if I no longer had it would I be loved..

I learned what it was to be an ordinary bartender in that bar.. and I learned what it was to be on the stage at that bar.. But I was the same person in both places but was treated quite differently in each position. So I wondered if my life was worth loving.. WHICH BRINGS TO MIND THIS VERSE THAT I WAS LEARNING EXPERIENTIALLY..

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

I started actually to hate what I loved.. suddenly it seemed the more crude.. the more bizarre you are the more the world respects you ..

With all these mixed emotions about the bar.. my career..
People in general..

I stormed our of that bar.. and looked for someplace to go.. someone to talk to ..

I called all the members of my Band no one was home..
I called a few friends no one was home..

I thought to myself.. should I call Barbara.. I thought let me try..
She was the only one home..

I went there and told her the story about the band.. about the people in the bar.. about people crashing the reception .. how my aunt said she hated me because of how good she thought I played the piano..

After I vented.. Barbara said.. why don't you go to church with me tomorrow.. I thought to myself.. I really don't want to .. but I said.. Ok.. but I thought I would make an excuse in the morning... and not go..

But for some reason the next day I went to that church .. and in that church the whole service consisted of people giving testimonies about how they got saved..

Then they showed a film portraying life as a spiritual battle between the Kingdom of Satan and God. Everything about the kingdom of Satan I was in .. everything about the Kingdom of God I was out..

They prayed, they sang, they shared.. and then at the end of the service.. I thought why am I fighting this. It is the opposite of the bar.. it is good, it is pure, it is clean .. Then I realized I had been fighting this tooth and nail.. AND IT WAS GOD THAT TURNED ME UPSIDE DOWN.. AND SAID HERE LET ME PRESENT THIS TO YOU ONE MORE TIME..

THIS IS THE PATTERN ..
HOW MUCH CLEARER COULD IT BE..
THIS WAS NON OTHER THAN GOD CHALLENGING ME!

IV. The Pattern of forsaking your way for the Lord's

It was at that little church.. that I prayed a prayer and I said.. Lord I can't believe I am here, this is you because I would never have come here on my own. I said in my heart Lord I will take you if you take me .. Tell me what to do and where to go.. and I will do it!

In my mind it was as if the Lord himself was there as a spiritual army recruiter and he pointed to me and said will you sign up to be one of my soldiers. I pictured myself being recruited.. and as signing on the dotted line. HERE I AM LORD..

When Paul saw that light on the road to Damascus he said LORD WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO!

I said it is enough the Lord has shown me He is real..
He has done this..
He tossed me about and sat me down in this church to consider this message!

V. The Pattern of a call in your life to follow the Lord WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO.. A CALL TO ACTION TO DO ..

I Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Acts 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Salvation... is a call to follow the Lord..

Film portraying life as a Spiritual Battle Between God and Satan....
I envisioned myself as having been recruited for the army of God..

If someone had shown me that the Lord wanted me to go to California I will have gone that morning...

PAUL CRIED OUT..

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

The Lord chose Paul to be a witness for him...

Only the Lord could bring into my life these circumstances..

THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR EACH OF US IS DIFFERENT
BUT THE PATTERN IS THE SAME..

Each of us have a unique story to tell ... What we were - a life not under the control of God..
Doing our own thing seeking our own glory.

God bought all these circumstances into my life to direct me ...

How is it my brother quit the accordion and I did not.. he played better than me..

How was it that I was there that summer when my cousin was starting up a little combo band and they encouraged me..

How was it when I went back to school after that vacation .. that I met friends who had a little combo band and I started to play music with them and then meet Peter Accardi..

How was it at age 16-17 I had a friend that took me to a jam session where Peter Accardi was forming a new Band and would ask a 17 year old kid to join his group..

How is it that I decided not to quit the Band to go to college.. and Peter Accardi gets saved... and then challenges me to get saved..

How is it that I get another Band together and meet someone through a friend who lets our band practice at her house.. who gets saved..

How is it that enough people aggravate me enough to look for someone to talk to and the only one home is Barbara.. who invites me to her church..

HOW IS IT..
HOW IS IT..

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS WITH GOD..

THIS IS NO OTHER THAN GOD ORCHESTRATING EVERYTHING TO BRING ME TO HIMSELF..

AND GOD DOES THE SAME THING IN EVERYBODY'S LIFE TO BRING THEM TO CHRIST

THIS IS A PATTERN

When we got home from Church that afternoon Barbara says.. Frank you're different .. what happened.. she said, did you ask Jesus into your heart?

I said Barbara I don't know what happened but this one thing I know is that I believe. I believe in the Lord ..

She said is there anyone you think you should tell about this?

I then told her about Peter..

She said why don't you call him?

I did ... and do you know what I said..

I SAID PETER I THINK THE SAME THING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU HAPPENED TO ME..
I COULD HAVE SAID.. THE SAME PATTERN THAT HAPPENED TO PAUL HAPPENED TO YOU

THE SAME PATTERN THAT HAPPENED TO YOU HAPPENED TO ME..

A PATTERN...

A PATTERN...

PRAISE GOD THERE IS A PATTERN, CAN YOU SEE IT? CAN YOU SEE IT?

It is the same.. different circumstances but the same outline and pattern !!

Can you see this pattern in your life?

THERE IS A FINAL PATTERN AND THIS PATTERN IS ALL SO MISSING IN THE CONVERSIONS OF MOST PEOPLE IN THE DAY THAT WE LIVE IN..

Finally Consider it has been 42 years since that day when I received the Lord.. a few days ago.. one of those who were the Icons of the music world .. one of the great successes committed suicide.. Why? The reason why is that that which I had feared came upon him. No, not that he died but he lost his ability to play because of a degenerative disease. Now 42 years later, first I am amazed that these rock and roll icons have lasted as long as they have, but still what I surmised 42 years ago has proved to be true..

NO MAN IS A FOOL FOR GIVING UP THAT WHICH HE CANNOT KEEP TO ATTAIN THAT WHICH HE CANNOT LOSE..

Often still I have people saying to me from back home that you were a great musician, why did you leave... why did you give it up.. The reason is God opened my heart and mind to the truth.

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Here we see a man.. Keith Emerson, who developed a degenerate disease.. and is told it is only going to get worse.. he soon will lose the ability to play. He already lost the ability to play and could only play with 8 fingers.. So this was his life.. and worse than death to him, was living and not being able to do what he loved..

It reminds me of what I asked my professor in music school. When I asked what he would do if he was stranded on an island somewhere without his instrument. He says he could sing.. Nonsense, he sang terribly.. Why could Keith Emerson not sing.. why could he not compose like Beethoven did when he lost his hearing.. I believe the reason was he was a performer.. and there is something about the excitement of performing that gives a thrill and it is almost like a drug. It is addictive.

Recently they had on TV a special news clip on ABS about the epidemic of Heroin addicts in America.. Their conclusion was that what we need is more treatment. Not what we need is more people who lose their life to the things that satisfy them in this world.. and give their life to Jesus Christ and find their life in Christ.

When I was in Seminary I had a teacher who lost his wife, lost his health lost his church .. and was filling in as a lecturer in our school. After class one day i come to him and said DOC.. what do you do when you can no longer preach no longer be in the ministry .. you are flat on your back in a hospital somewhere. What do you do? How do you make it?

He didn't say you take a gun a shoot yourself.. With a twinkle in his eye he said if you lost everything in this world you still have one thing .. THE LORD.. You can pray. No man can take that from you.

If your life is hid in Christ nothing can separate you from this..

I don't live for my music.. though I still do music..

I don't live for the ministry though i do the ministry..

I don't live for my family .. though I have a wonderful family ..

I don't live for my business.. though the Lord has even allowed me to have a business..

I LIVE FOR THE LORD.. AND HE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD TO ME..

There was a day 42 years ago where I would have probably done the same thing that Keith Emerson did a few days ago if put in the same position he found himself in .. BUT PRAISE GOD 42 years ago I lost my life to Christ and found my life..

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

3-13-16
THE PATTERN OF A GOOD TESTIMONY PART II

I Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

I Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

I Timothy 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

I Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- I. The Pattern of what you were before you knew the Lord..**
- II. The Pattern of God seeking you out...**
- III. The Pattern of the day God called you to himself...**
- IV. The Pattern of forsaking your way for the Lord's**
- V. The Pattern of a call in your life to follow the Lord**
- VI. The Pattern of being faithful unto death..**

VI. The Pattern of being faithful unto death..

Salvation is not a thing you try,,,,,

People having trouble in marriage, the reason why is that everyone is trying it out and few are committed. We are to commit to marriage not try it out. Today we try it out, which is a sure method of failure. A commitment is the key to success. When you enter a relationship with the idea that you are going to try it out first, you start that relationship out with doubt.. How can you succeed in doubt? The only way a person is saved is through faith. And if you come to the Lord saying I will try it out, you will never get the blessings you desire.

Since the Bible clearly says that he that comes to God must believe that He is and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him..

Problem with some is they try it like a rabbits foot..

People today want to test the water and live together before they commit to marriage. This is bad.

Was your salvation a decision? A decision and commitment for life...

Ruth 1:15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

Ruth 1:16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Ruth 1:17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

Ruth 1:18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

Have you put your hand to the plow not to look back?

Have you burned the bridges behind you?

No turning back...

Remember Lots wife...

HERE WE SEE THE PATTERN....

Is this pattern in your life????

VII. EVERYONE WILL GIVE EAR TO A GOOD TESTIMONY

Acts 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

Acts 22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Acts 22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Acts 22:6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

Acts 22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

Acts 22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

Acts 22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

Acts 22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

Acts 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

Acts 22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

Acts 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

Acts 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts 22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

Acts 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Acts 22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Acts 22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

Paul continued to share his testimony throughout his ministry....

I have had people who would not allow me to open a Bible... yet I could share my testimony... and they would listen..

Why is a testimony a powerful tool to use?

VIII. It is hard to argue against a good testimony..

Acts 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

Acts 23:10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

The Pharisees said... who are we to argue against his experience .. if an angel spoke to him.. let's not fight against God! Your testimony is hard to refute. It is what happened to you and even your enemies would have to admit something happened.

IX. A GOOD TESTIMONY IS THE MOST PERSUASIVE TOOL YOU HAVE TO WIN OTHERS TO CHRIST

Acts 26:2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

Acts 26:3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

Acts 26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

Acts 26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Acts 26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

Acts 26:7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Acts 26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?
Acts 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Acts 26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

Acts 26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Acts 26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

Acts 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

Acts 26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Acts 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Acts 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Acts 26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

Acts 26:22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

Acts 26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Acts 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Acts 26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Acts 26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Many times I have gone to talk to people who will not allow me to open my Bible, or hand them a tract yet every time I have been able to share my testimony.

X. A GOOD TESTIMONY IS WHAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND EVERYONE... YOU NEED NOT GO TO SCHOOL TO LEARN TO USE IT

Mark 5:1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.
Mark 5:2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
Mark 5:3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
Mark 5:4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
Mark 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.
Mark 5:6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,
Mark 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
Mark 5:8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.
Mark 5:9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.
Mark 5:10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.
Mark 5:11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.
Mark 5:12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.
Mark 5:13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.
Mark 5:14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

Mark 5:15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Mark 5:16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.
Mark 5:17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.
Mark 5:18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.
Mark 5:19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.
Mark 5:20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

YOU NEED NOT GO TO BIBLE COLLEGE TO SHARE A GOOD TESTIMONY!

It is most effective witnessing tool you have and you can use it right away... It is hard to refute short of calling you a liar. In others words it your statement of what happened. It is hard to argue against an experience you experienced.

HAS GOD DONE GREAT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE?

Here are some suggestions in closing:

Write down your testimony.
Learn to be able to share it.. in short form and in long form..
Learn to be able to put Bible verses with it..

Learn to be able to go from your testimony into a short plan of salvation.

Conclusion:

Many people will say, well my testimony is not as exiting as yours. I would disagree with them or anyone. Let's say you were raised in a Christian home and saved at an early age. I feel this is a greater testimony than mine. The reason why is that you were saved from the having to experience the scars of sin. Remember, David may have had a lot of exciting battles he faced in his life but the Lord said those battles disqualified him from building the temple. He was a bloody man so to speak. He had a lot of blood on his hands. So too, this world of sin leaves a lot of spiritual scars in our lives. So in my mind if God shows a person their sinful condition never having to go through the full cesspool of sin that is a far greater thing than having experienced the pain of repercussion of many sins first hand. I am glad that I got saved at the age of 21. If I had continued in the world I am sure that I would have gotten deeper and deeper into sins that may have disqualified me from being able to be in the ministry.

In the ministry I also know that many young people get enamored with sin. I hesitate sometimes to get into too much details about my past. I have seen where young people have an unhealthy curiosity for some of the things I was involved in. The apostle Paul even said it is a shame to even mention some of those things. So I believe we need to be careful in sharing our testimonies that we do not glamorize and sensationalize the sin of our past.

Having said all this I am still under the firm conviction that our testimonies need to be shared. Paul, right to the end of his life, testified of what happened to him on the road to Damascus. I just turned 63 and I still marvel at how God saved me and changed my life. Don't ever lose that first love you had when Jesus changed your life and made you a new born creature in Jesus Christ. **THIS IS THE PATTERN PAUL MENTIONED ..**