

ECCLÉSIA

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STORY: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

SHARINGSTORIES

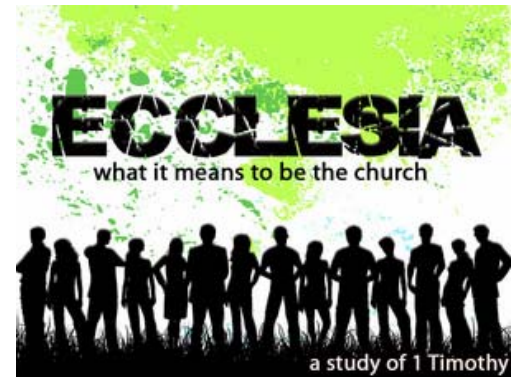
The passage we studied on Sunday related Paul's personal story of experiencing God's mercy, grace, and enablement to participate in the Father's life. Besides offering further insight into who Paul is, this passage was a great reminder of the true purpose of our lives.

We tend to think of our lives as our own and that we invite God to come alongside us and enter into our lives. In fact, the opposite is true. We are given the privilege to join God's life and participate in the work He is doing. This is a serious shift in thinking for most of us. Henri Nouwen touched on this same idea when he said, "[o]ur life is not a possession to be guarded, but a gift to be given away."

Let's spend a few minutes talking about this idea.

Is God part of your life or are you part of His? What would it look like for us to be part of His life?

Who do you know personally that best illustrates giving away their life? Share their story.



DIGGINGIN

Think about your own story for a moment. The online magazine [Smith](#) asked readers to write the story of their own lives using six words and used the results to create a book entitled *Not Quite What I Was Expecting*. Here are a few examples: *70 years, few tears, hairy ears. Watching quietly from every door frame. Extremely responsible, secretly longed for spontaneity. Almost a victim of my family. Painful nerd kid, happy nerd adult.*

What is your six-word life story? Share it with the group and briefly explain.

Why is having an awareness of our own stories important?

How can a lack of awareness of our stories negatively affect how we live and interact with God?

GOINGDEEPER

Paul does not pull any punches when he talks about his past. He is entirely honest about the ugly parts of his life and also enthusiastic about his new life with God.

What is Paul's purpose in sharing his story? How was he hoping his hearers would benefit from his story?

Everyone has something to share about God's work in their life. How can others benefit from your story?

PRAYER

Spend this time discerning how best pray for one another. Praise God for one specific item and petition Him for one request on their behalf.

Thank God for the exciting developments with the permanent facility. Ask Him to give our people the courage to be generous with their giving and to see it as an act of worship. Praise God for being our God.

REFLECTION

What one idea has the Spirit impressed on your mind and heart from this passage?

How do we identify with the plot of God's life?

How do you struggle to live by faith?

How do you struggle to love others?

ECCLÉSIAWHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE CHURCH