

## BLESS: Share

**Opener:** What's your favorite story? How come?

**Scripture:** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: <sup>2</sup> . . . <sup>4</sup> "The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, . . . and can testify . . . that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup> And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. . . . King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. . . .

<sup>9</sup> "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. . . . I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

<sup>12</sup> "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup> About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup> We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' <sup>15</sup> "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. <sup>16</sup> "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. . . . so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." <sup>19</sup> "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. <sup>20</sup> First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles. . . Acts 26 (condensed)

### Discussion Questions

1. Paul most definitely knew how to share his story! And it was a powerful one. Most of us don't think our story is interesting enough to actually make a difference, and yet we all have a story to share. What makes sharing our story different than giving a speech?
2. What makes a personal story (or testimony) effective? Has anyone ever shared theirs with you? What was your reaction? What did you learn from what and how they shared that's helped you with your own testimony?
3. When Paul spoke he described (i) his life before trusting Christ, (ii) how he came to faith in Christ, and (iii) how his life changed after submitting to Christ. This is a three part approach we can incorporate by coming up with three words or phrases to describe our experience. What three words or phrases would you use to describe your own life journey?
4. Once you have three words or phrases you can expand on them with just a few sentences. Now you have a draft of your own story! Be sure to include the good news, which is simply that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins, rose from the dead so we can have life with God, and eternal life is given as a free gift to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.
5. If you've ever shared your story/testimony, what reaction(s) did you get?

**Wrap Up:** Who's the hero of your story? Jesus is the hero of Paul's story. Paul's attitude and focus are most clearly revealed in Acts 26:29, "I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." Likewise, when we share our story we understand it's about connecting with others in a way that builds relationships. It gives us opportunities to talk about things that actually matter. Give it a try, see what happens.