

YOUR STORY MATTERS

You are here because someone has sinned against you, and the pain of their sin has impacted you deeply. You desire freedom and healing, but perhaps feel unsure about how to experience it, or you have significant fears about digging back into the past. As you begin the journey, you need to know that your story matters, and sharing it with someone who will bear your burden with you is the starting point to release the abundant grace of God in healing your wounds.

Heart Questions: What fears do you have about sharing your story with someone else? What are the negative impacts of keeping your story to yourself?

Your Story Matters to God

Take turns reading the following scriptures out loud to each other...

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalm 46:1-2 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea..."

Psalm 55:22 "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."

Psalm 147:3&6 "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds... the Lord supports the afflicted; He brings down the wicked to the ground."

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope..."

1 Peter 5:7 "...casting all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

How would you summarize the heart of God toward you, and toward the pain you have been through? What does God promise you in your brokenness?

Your Story Matters to the Church

Read the following verses out loud together...

1 Cor 12:25-26 "...but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Romans 12:15-16 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation..."

Romans 15:1-3 "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those who without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me."

For the listening friend, take a few minutes and share with the victim of sexual abuse why their story matters to you. Tell them why it is a joy to bear this burden with them.

Tell Your Story

Take a few minutes and pray together. Then, simply share your story. There is no prescribed formula or format. Just ask God to give you courage to tell it, and allow Him to lead the conversation. Your friend wants to hear, and wants to share compassion and empathy with you.

How God Tells Your Story

Satan wants us to remain isolated in our pain, and to be defined by the shame we feel because of what has been done to us (and because of what we have done). What does shame look like and feel like for you?

In the columns below, contrast the way shame tells your story compared to the way God tells your story. In the left column, write down words that shame brings into your mind that you have allowed to define you, and that you have believed about yourself? In the right column, write down words that God uses to describe you?

The way shame tells your story	The way God tells your story

Read Ephesians 1:1-8 together. What are key words describing what God has done for you and who you are in Christ? How can these words battle shame?

What can you do to begin to embrace God's story and live in its goodness?