



PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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A 3:15 Response: Fulfilling Jesus' Heart Part One: "My STORY"

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

In the June issue of the *Paraclete*, I introduced the inspired instruction of the apostle Peter to first-century Christians who were facing a secular Roman culture:

Simply reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience... (1 Peter 3:15, JB)

Christians in America today are confronted with a similar situation. **To be effective witnesses for the Good News of Jesus we will also need to make a "3:15 Response."** There are four components of this response. In this issue, I will detail the first one.

My STORY: "May I share with you what God has done in my life?"

The blind man who was healed by Jesus was asked by the skeptical Pharisees to explain what happened to him (John 9). He kept it simple: *"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see"* (v. 25, NIV). **That was his story!** A man crippled from birth was healed by Peter in the name of Jesus. His immediate response was to go into the temple courts *"walking and jumping and praising God"* (Acts 3:8).

You may not feel that you have a dramatic story to tell, but **your personal testimony can have a powerful impact.** You are claiming to be in touch with the transcendent Creator of the universe. He loves and cares about you, has forgiven you, and assures you of eternal life with



You are the sole expert on your experience with God. Are you prepared to tell YOUR STORY?

Him. This is intriguing to a person who doesn't know God. Don't do theology at this point or even cite evidence; **simply share the experience** of how your life *with* God is different than your life *without* God. Don't be hesitant. Do it with boldness and with conviction.

Even if you confessed Jesus as Savior when a child with little memory of a time without God, you know from Scripture that without God you were born with a **sin nature**; were **separated from God** with no experience or expectation of forgiveness; and had **no assurance of life after death**. Now you have been born again by the Holy Spirit who is continually at work to transform you into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Tell that story!

Here are your action steps:

- **Pray** for the Holy Spirit to convict you deeply that confession of sin and personal faith in Jesus is the **only way of salvation** (Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11-13). Ask God to give you a burden for those without Jesus who are lost forever.
- **Identify and write down three positive changes** you have experienced

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"Shiny Faces"

By Dr. Kaia Kloster

As I go into the jail to "Proclaim the Gospel with evidence," I never know who will choose to come to Bible study—or why. One day, a woman shared with me why she had decided to come. Although her mom had been raised in the church, they hadn't been taken as kids because her mom didn't want to "force her beliefs on them." So while not raised as a Christian, she was aware of **"them."** In her daily encounters with people she was quite certain she could identify them.

There was something different—it seemed there was a "glow" about them. **She and her boyfriend came to call them "shiny faces."** Upon leaving a gas station, for example, she might turn to him and say, "She was a 'shiny face,' wasn't she!" **It was as if there was a light from within**, she said. The difference was undeniable, and always desirable.



I am uncertain of the circumstances which brought her to the jail, but once there she received a Life Recovery Bible. As she opened the cover to check it out, **a verse at the bottom of the very first page caught her eye.** It was Psalm 34:5 (NIV):

Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

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IN THE NEWS 

What's a "Scutoid"?

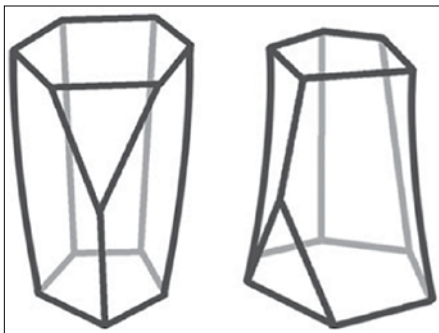
Consider these statements:

- Scientists know everything about cells because they have been studying them for 500 years.
- You learned every possible geometric shape in school.

Neither statement is true!

While carefully examining the epithelial (skin) cells of zebra fish, researchers from the University of Seville in Spain discovered a "scutoid," a shape previously unknown in geometry.

A scutoid is six-sided on one end, five-sided on the other, and has one side in the shape of a "Y," which allows neighboring scutoids to slot seamlessly together. It increases the cell's flexibility and strength.



Scutoids, as illustrated in the *Nature* article announcing their discovery in July, 2018.


Illustration:
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-05376-1.epdf>
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As the technology of tissue engineering advances toward **artificial organs**, this discovery is very important since engineered cells will be rejected if they do not match exactly.

Amazing discoveries like this confirm the **"genius" of God** as stated by the apostle Paul: *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"* (Romans 11:33).



Sources: Answers Magazine, November-December 2018, Vol. 13, No. 6, page 31.
 USA Today Network, Ashley May, July 30, 2018

 **Did You Know?**

"Blind as a bat." Really?


That's a myth.

Most bats can see as well as humans—and are even adapted to low-light like cats—and in color.

Where did the myth come from? Perhaps from the observation of their navigation at break-neck speed through total darkness.



Their unique echolocation ability is **literally thousands of times more efficient than any similar system built by humans.**

But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you...who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this...?
 — (Job 12:7-9). 


Source: Answers Magazine, March-April, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 30

FOR REFLECTION

"One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative. Christianity is not conservative, but revolutionary." —Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the 20th Century*

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him.

Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man. "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."


The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's exactly the same in my business." 

"Shiny Faces"

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She had been right. They *were* "shiny faces"! **This simple connection between what the Bible says and what she saw in the world was an important part of her newfound spark of faith.** It was a joy to watch her seek truth and grow in her faith as she made more connections between what the Bible says and the evidence she saw in the world.

As I thought about her testimony, I found her observations were convicting in some ways. I couldn't help but wonder: **Am I a "shiny face"?** How many people who claim to be Christians shine in this dark world? Maybe we all should ask... Am I a "shiny face"?


"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory..." (2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV). 

A 3:15 Response

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in your life because of your faith in Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23; John 5:24; Romans 8:1,16). One of them should be your assurance of eternal life with God.

- **Organize** these changes into a brief presentation of about **three minutes**, and **rehearse** until you can share with ease and sincerity. You do not share your story to preach at people, but to give praise for what the Lord has done in your life. Ask permission ("May I share with you..."). You will find this to be a natural way to begin a conversation about God.

In the next issue of the *Paraclete*, I will explain a second component which will shape your mind to think like Jesus: **"My Worldview."** It will further enhance your **"3:15 Response"** to fulfill the heart of Jesus (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). 

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