

Rock Solid The Power of Remembering

BLOG

October 2012 – I could have sat there for hours.

It was opening night of Rock Solid—a collection of leaders who come together to understand more fully what it means to be rock-solid on the inside and dangerous for the Kingdom on the outside. Seated in a circle and sipping our drinks, the twelve of us introduced ourselves first by sharing a snapshot of the most significant people in our lives.

And then came the best part.

We took a few minutes to review the account where Old Testament leader Joshua instructed the people of Israel to roll up their sleeves and pile up some stones as a memorial—a memorial that would serve as a pedagogical prop from generation to generation of how God led His people through the Jordan River on dry ground.

In a similar spirit, each of us had come prepared to talk about the “memorial stones” of our lives. Having searched the hard drives of our own histories, one by one, we rehearsed a challenging chapter in our lifelong journey—and how God met us in the middle of it. From family heartaches to a near-fatal accident, the bitter realities of life were as clear as could be.

But juxtaposed against the certainty of those harsh realities was the certainty of God’s remarkable intervention. God showed up. Each gave witness that our God is a game-changer. Behind in the fourth quarter with the clock ticking away, He came through—one more time. At one moment, what looked like certain doom and defeat, turned out to be yet another billboard of God’s miraculous power.

Story after story. Witness after witness. Testimony after testimony. Like I said, I could have sat there for hours.

With a whack of a 2×4, that night I was struck once again by the power of remembering, the importance of memorial.

As a leader, you have faced and will continue to face repeated encounters with crises and uncertainties. They are simply part of the leadership space. (No need for anyone to tweet you on that!)

And in those moments of crisis, when every eye is trained on you with that “what now?” look, the battle-tested leader reaches deep into the bank account of memories and recites, better yet, relives one of the ways that God has come through in the past.

In a word, leaders need to be story-tellers. But to be a good story-teller, you first need to be a good story-collector—archiving a mental (even a written) inventory of the “God-stories” birthed in your particular leadership landscape. For example, if you are a leader of an organization, what are the one-of-a-kind stories about how God came through for you when you weren’t sure how you would meet accounts payable last summer? Or if you are a parent, what are the against-all-odds stories about how God, in spite of the bleak medical prognosis, reached down and placed His hand of healing on your 6-year-old daughter?

You get the picture. Stories remind. Stories teach. Stories inspire.

In short, stories have power.

Do you think there’s a connection between the power of story and the words in Revelation: *They overcame him [the evil one] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony?*

I think so.