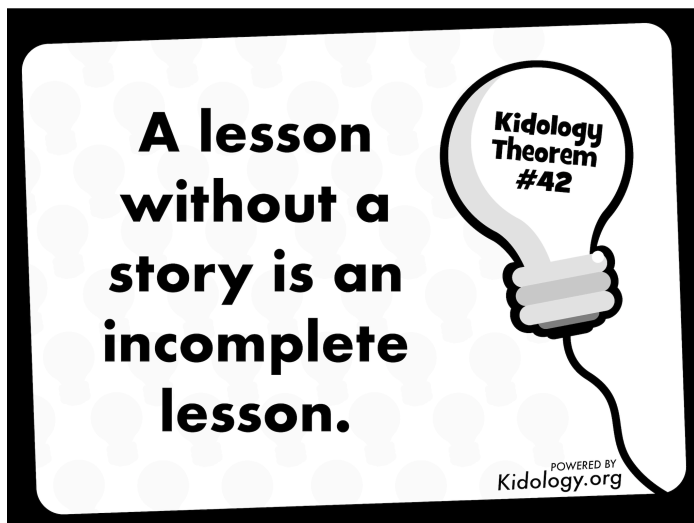


Theorem #42: A lesson without a story is an incomplete lesson.



In Bible College I learned that the theological definition of faith is 'active belief'. This means that **to believe something is not enough; you must act on that belief in order for that belief to be transformed into faith.** Therefore, if you want to put your faith in Jesus, you can't just believe in Jesus, you need to *act on that belief* by putting your *faith* in Him. That *active belief becomes faith*. I could now go on with various biblical references to unpack this concept from James, John, and the Apostle Paul, but instead – let me shift to another way of explaining faith.

In Sunday School, as a young boy, my teacher told me a story about a young girl whose bedroom was on the second floor. In the middle of the night, she was awakened by the smell of smoke followed almost immediately by the sounds of sirens out in the street. As her dad had taught her, she felt the door and, noticing

it felt warm, she knew not to open it. She went to her window and opened it instead. As the cold night air rushed in, she heard the firemen below instructing her to climb out onto the ledge below her window. As she carefully climbed out, smoke began to fill her room and quickly her eyes began to water. She started to cry, and fear overcame her. The firemen called up to her and told her they had a blanket stretched out below her and all she had to do was jump and they would catch her and rush her off to safety. But as the smoke increased and her ability to see was hindered, the little girl was paralyzed by fear. She could now hear crashing sounds behind her and feel heat on her back and the firemen began to yell at her that she had to jump – but she was too terrified. She wanted to jump, but she was too scared. “Believe us, we will catch you!” yelled one fireman. She did believe the strong men below could catch her, but she was just too scared to jump all the way from the second floor to the yard below. Then she heard it – her father’s voice. “Honey, it’s me, Daddy. I’m right down here. I’m with the firemen. I love you. I won’t let anything happen to you. You have to let go of the window and jump.” That was all she needed – her father’s voice. She let go of the windowsill and fell into the darkness. In seconds she was wrapped in the blanket and was safely in her father’s arms. She hadn’t believed the fireman, but when she heard her father’s voice, she was able to take action – because she could easily put her faith in her Daddy. She knew He loved her and wouldn’t let anything happen to her. I remember my Sunday School teacher said, “Boys and girls, that’s what faith is. We can’t just believe in Jesus, we have to let go and fall into the arms of our Heavenly Father – because we know that He loves us too, and He won’t let anything happen to us, if we will trust in Him.”

So, let me ask you, which of these attempts to explain faith is better? The theological definition, or the story?

There is a reason Jesus told stories. Stories are powerful. They capture hearts, they transform minds, and they change lives. That's why I like to say, "A lesson without a story is an incomplete lesson." Granted, not every lesson has to have a story, but I dare say, every lesson that does have a story is a more powerful and more impactful lesson than those that do not. There is no better way to capture attention, engage hearts and pass on truth. I find this true from children's church to preaching in "Big Church" to casual faith conversations. **I can't tell you how many times I am in a group of children, and they say to me, "Tell us a story."**

Stories connect the heart to the mind and change lives like nothing else. **They make messages matter by transforming content to context and theory to reality.** They answer the question, "What does this look like?"

One good story is often better than the same amount of time spent explaining something. Doubt me? Re-read the Gospels.