

“Are you ready to testify?”

If presented with the opportunity to give a 30-second elevator pitch, or have a 3-minute cocktail conversation on your faith that could change the lives of those around you in unimaginable, would you be ready?

This is what Betsy Orr, General Partner of LOBOCK LLP challenged the attendees at BELIEVES with on Tuesday, February 18th, after BELIEVES had been postponed from the previous week due to the arrival of Atlanta’s second snow storm this year.

“Glad you weren’t scared off by the title of today’s session Ready to Testify? Somehow, the word ‘testify’ can strike fear in people’s hearts!” Orr told everyone as she began leading the discussion.



Orr defined the word ‘testify’ as giving evidence as a witness to something that has happened or something that you have been involved in. Though the word is often associated with a legal or courtroom context, Orr offered that giving evidence of our faith and God working in our lives is something that we can do at any time in any interaction if we’re aware and prepared to do so.

“See how you would answer one of these questions,” Orr asked the audience, as she invited Andrew Schoppe, BELIEVES Coordinator, to join in a role play of four typical answers we often hear when asked the question “How are you doing/what have you been up to?”

In the role play, Schoppe provided four typical responses about things like the weather, work, and kids, but all were surface answers and lacked not only any insights about Schoppe himself, but also any testimony to what God was doing in his life.

“My goal for this hour is to challenge you to think differently about that question and take the opportunity to weave some ‘God talk’ into your answer, particularly as it relates to your business or professional life,” Orr shared after the role play ended. “In order to do this, I first want to convince you that mere words can have a huge impact on people around you. ‘God talk’ can be incredibly uncomfortable for some people, but it can take conversations and relationships to a whole new level.”

The power of testimony and words certainly has biblical precedence, as Orr shared when referencing scripture in the book of Acts.

In Acts 2:14-37, Peter addresses the crowd and 3,000 people convert to Christianity and are baptized and in Acts 4:1-4 Peter and John speak to many people and those who heard came to believe in Christ as they spoke.

“Sometimes what we say and the way we say it, even if it’s not accompanied by action, will deeply impact someone,” Orr emphasized.

With the discussion framed, Orr changed gears and invited everyone to engage in some exercises that ultimately would give the chance for each attendee to weave faith and God into their 30-second elevator speech.

“Imagine someone asks you about your professional life. The question you’re asked might be ‘How is work going?’ or ‘What do you do?’” Orr mentioned. “Take a few minutes and write down in 3-4 sentences what your 30-second response would be to those questions.”

Everyone began the exercise, and then a few volunteers such as Eric Maust, VP at Chase, and Vergena Clark, Managing Director at IKOR Solutions, delivered their 30-second elevator speeches.

“Now, let’s see if we can do the same thing with this question: What has God been up to your life in the past 6-12 months?” Orr asked.

The attendees silently began to reflect on this question, writing down their thoughts, and then sharing them with others at their table.

At one table, participants shared some moments that were very personal, such as the unexpected loss of one man’s mother to cancer over the holidays, or another man’s physical recovery from back pain that he said is causing him to learn more patience.

Mike Boutros, attorney at Krevolin Horst LLC, recalled his adventures from Atlanta’s ‘snowjam’ on January 28th and added, “In the snow storm two weeks ago, my fiancée and I definitely were blessed and protected by God because we narrowly avoided not just one, but two car accidents that Tuesday – coming within a few millimeters of hitting another car that had lost control on the ice.”

“Now, since CTK BELIEVES focuses on integrating faith and work,” stated Orr. “Can you integrate any ‘God talk’ into the way you would answer the questions about how work is going or what do you do?”

Almost everyone acknowledged that integrating faith into the 30-second elevator pitch was a lot harder, but several were able to do it successfully during the session.

“I always pepper my 30-second elevator pitch with key words that often have faith involved,” AT&T Corporate Training Manager Yovany Jerez said. “There is nothing in HR that prevents me from saying I had a blessed weekend.”

When asked what his integrated 30-second elevator pitch would be, Jerez said, “I am excited to train, recruit, and coach servant leaders, and pray this starts their careers to serve others’ needs.”

Orr commented that part of the reason the integrating faith into the opportunities we have to talk with others can seem challenging is because we often compartmentalize our work and faith lives and often don’t even think about how God shows up in our work lives.

Raymond James Financial Advisor Max Dean commented, “I used to separate things in work, but now I find that I get most excited when I have the chance to work with clients to filter investment opportunities through a sustainability lens. It is exciting when beliefs and investments can be tied together.”

Orr followed the comments by Dean and others by citing a few verses of scripture such as 1 Peter 3:15 and 1 Corinthians 3:6 and emphasized that the goal of being able to weave 'God talk' into a conversation with someone – whether in a more personal or business conversation – is to be ready and willing.

"But what is it that prevents us from doing this in our lives?" Orr asked.

"Some of it is just a courage thing," said Urjanet Director and CTK Parishoner Tim Porter.

Walter Kozik, a retiree and CTK parishoner agreed.

"We want to fit in and do what everyone else is doing. It's peer pressure, and we are a part of the peer pressure," Kozik said.

Gene Rice, Partner at Vantage Realty and the 2014 leader for CHRP at CTK added, "A certain amount of it is just vulnerability too. With social media, it is so easy to just post all good things going on."

Orr tied all the comments together when she said in the end, we have to look at these moments we have with others as opportunities, just like the apostles did as the forerunners to our faith.

"Like St. Paul, we are called to be willing to plant a seed - others will water it, and God will make it grow," Orr stated.

"If you can give the 30-second answer or pitch to the question 'How are you doing?' - whether in your personal or business life - and weave a God moment into the answer, you may find yourself in a 3-minute conversation, and who knows where that will lead," shared Orr.

All of this, Orr said, is evangelization.

"It's really not so intimidating if we keep it focused on what God is doing in our personal and work lives," revealed Orr. "We aren't called to be adept at apologetics or the defense of the faith. Rather, we are called as baptized Christians to testify to what God is doing for us personally and professionally, and that takes care of itself as God can then reveal Himself to us and others."

