

# **Personal Introduction**

Any class I teach I give an introduction to "Who I am."

Usually this is NOT in a "Christian" university environment...

But I like my students to know up front about my faith...

Then I promise that I will not use my platform to try to "preach" about faith.

This school....this class... is quite different,

YET I want to express to you how important faith is in my life.

It seems to me that giving you a quick life story will help all of you to know/understand -  
"what makes me tick."

I was born in "the deep South" of the United States.

At 10 years old of my young life was the Civil Rights movement...

And I have clear memories of this period of American history.

Since I am from the deep South  
I am used to being seen as a  
"redneck," an ignorant person  
because of my accent.

I am used to some people  
assuming that I am a racist simply  
because I grew up in the South.

My father was one of the first  
engineers hired by NASA when I  
was 4 yrs old.

He was one of the lead engineers  
that developed the Space Shuttle  
booster rocket, the Saturn V.

[ 5 min ]

My family was not a "Christian" family. My mother grew up Christian, but compromised her faith by marrying my father.

I grew up hearing from my dad that "religion was for weak people who needed a crutch."

Maths and Science...and Sports replaced God in my family.

All of the children played sports.

I was a stand out athlete my whole life. I ended up playing college basketball.

We went to a liberal Methodist church where I never heard any clear presentation of the gospel.

In this non-Christian house, even though we did not understand faith...

my mother instilled faith principles in me and my brothers...

At 15 yrs old I broke my ankle playing football...became

depressed, and for around 3-4 months I drank and did some drugs.

I was caught with friends and kicked out of school.

This pushed me to try to "find" God. I started reading non-Christian spiritual books, did some transcendental meditation...and for a year "searched" for God.

At 17yrs old a fellow basketball player shared the gospel with me and God broke into my life.

[ 9 min ]

Everything changed.

I was a very disciplined athlete.

When all my friends were out  
goofing around and drinking and  
chasing girls...

I could be found in the gym...alone,  
working on my basketball skills...  
or whatever sport I was in.

You guys will notice as we go that I  
have a bit of OCD.



I get focused and have a hard time doing anything else other than what I am focused on.

I directed this discipline at growing spiritually.

I became friends with another athlete who was sold-out to Jesus...

We became best friends,  
And he led me...and taught me a lot about what it means to live for Christ. He disciplined me...before we even knew the term "discipleship."

I did my first year in university on a basketball scholarship.

God was dealing with me about sports being an idol in my life.

When the basketball season ended I resigned my scholarship and dropped out of university to join Youth With A Mission.

I didn't tell my parents until I had already dropped out.

They were NOT happy.

At 17 yrs old I went with YWAM to Argentina to do outreach at the 1978 World Cup.

Argentina won that year and it was crazy.

We lived in a monastery... witnessed in the streets, and I saw miracles...many of them.

I lived in Argentina for almost a year and completed Discipleship Training School and School of Evangelism.

In the middle of the year I did an intensive Spanish course and after three months was fluent.

[ a small vocabulary, but fluent ]

The Director asked me to lead an evangelism team that would criss-cross the country...and I was psyched.

Then my mom called me and demanded that I return to the U.S. and finish school.

I told her "no."

In passing I said something about it and the Director told me that I must return home.

I had to submit to my parents!?!

I was NOT at all happy.

I finished my undergraduate degree  
Business Management and  
Marketing.

I was discipling 2-3 young men in school and as a team, we started a discipleship house.

My plan was to go with YWAM to the World Cup outreach in Spain in 1982...

God's plan was different.  
He wanted me to lead the Chi Alpha Campus Ministry at the University I had attended.  
I argued with God...and lost.

Well, I led XA AND within a year I met my wife Heather.

Together we served in XA for the next 14 years at three different schools.

In my first year of marriage Heather and I attended a 3 week national XA training school.

I entered into my journal that the Lord seemed to be speaking to me about doing a PhD in Early Church History.

[ 16 min ]

There are tons of stories I could tell  
about my years at the  
Univ of Alabama leading XA...  
But I just do not have the time.

We saw so many great things:

- scores of students come to Christ
- students being filled w/Spirit
- miracles of healing
- several students called to ministry
- Charles Gravely

In 1989-1990 I did a year of  
Homeric and Classical Greek...  
at the Univ of Alabama



with the idea that I would eventually do a PhD and would need Greek.

I was Licensed, then Ordained in the Assemblies of God.

And then...through some truly miraculous ways...God spoke to me and led me to move my family to St Andrews, Scotland where I became a PhD in 2001.

I Pastored an Assembly of God Church in Dundee Scotland while I was getting the PhD.

[ 19 min ]

For the last 8.5 years I have been  
Pastoring a small church in the  
university town where I did my  
undergraduate degree.

Over 48 years of following Jesus...  
I have had some intense struggles.

- my wife and I lost our first two  
babies - late-term fetal death
- I went through a spiritual desert  
for 8 yrs
- I have struggled with spiritual  
pride (and still do battle that...)

- I am still a sinner...saved by grace
- I have waited over 20 years for God to open this door

THIS door...to teach in a seminary.  
I dedicated my life to Jesus when I was 17...  
and He has been gracious to me.

I do not deserve His goodness.

I am so grateful to be here with you guys.

[ 21 min]

So, that is my story.

QUESTIONS?

I would like each of you to take  
15 minutes and tell me about your  
story.

The more I know you,  
the better I can help you...  
and teach you...

Plus, I just like knowing my  
students.

# A Short Intro to CHURCH HISTORY

My expertise is the first four centuries: from the Book of Acts thru the death of Constantine the Great.

So if you look at our daily schedule you will see that our first 7-8

classes will be in my wheelhouse:

- the historical backdrop of the NT
- the struggle of the apostles
- the second century writers that we call the "Apostolic Fathers"

[earliest Christian writers w/o NT]

- early "inspired" Christian docs
- oral tradition
- when/how the NT MSS began to circulate - how the NT came to be what we call the NT Canon
- the early heresies:
  - + docetism + dualism
  - + Gnosticism
- Roman persecution
  - + martyrdom + second repentance
- early schisms in the church

+Marcion +Marcellina +Montanus  
+ Donatus + Arius

## Other Areas:

- the Alexandrian influence
- + Clement + Origen + Athanasius
- the beginning and development of the monastic movement
- Christian spirituality  
(contemplative prayer)
- The Great Persecution - 303AD
- Constantine becomes emperor

- + his faith + his leadership
- + involvement in the Church
- \* church councils (Arles - Nicea)

AFTER ALL OF THIS:

I will be outside my expertise.

I will be learning/growing.

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

What YOU need to do:

- I will give you readings from the textbook and additional readings



- Start looking over ALL of my daily schedule to find a topic that you want to write about.

- You need to pick a topic by the middle of October.

- I want you to leave this class knowing a good deal about 3-4 topics.

Your term paper will be the MAIN thing that you leave knowing well.

I will help you with the paper.

You can turn in a draft...

I will read it and return it with notes and with a grade.

Then you can rewrite it...and turn it in again.

I will offer my criticisms again AND your grade will improve.

I will do this as many times as possible until mid-November.

Your paper is due on Nov 18.

We will discuss the paper more as we move forward.

[ 40 min]