



re|engage

Speaking at re|engage

Temple Baptist Church

Thank you for choosing to share the story of how God has worked in your marriage. Know that we understand the energy, effort and time it takes to prepare and speak. We are excited to see how the Lord will use your personal story to encourage and challenge couples towards oneness with each other and intimacy with Christ. We are grateful for you!

Remember these two questions as you pray and prepare to speak at re|engage:

WHO is your audience?

Couples in varying stages of marriage, married anywhere from 5 months to 40 years. Some are 8's on a scale of 1-10 but most are below 5, in fact, many are closer to 1-2.

WHAT is your aim?

To give hope that no matter where they are in their marriage, they have not crossed a line they can't come back from! And to convey to the listener, "You are not alone."

CREATIVE GUIDELINES:

1. **Breathe** – It's natural to be nervous about speaking publicly. Think about your own experience as an audience member. You want the speakers to succeed. Offer yourself the same grace.
2. **Pray** - Ask God for help in your preparation and for the right words to share.
3. **Begin by talking more than you write** – Sit down and discuss your story together. You can't cover your whole marriage in twenty minutes. Spend time figuring out the part of your story that best reflects God's ability to restore/strengthen your marriage. Mutually agreeing on what needs to be told and how to tell it is the most important foundational step for sharing your story.
4. **Write with the end in mind** – As you include information about your childhood, meeting, and early days of marriage focus more on the details that deal **directly** with the healing of your marriage. Some foundational background is necessary for comprehension, but if it doesn't contribute to your aim, it is okay to skip it. Just because it is part of your marriage doesn't mean it needs to be part of your re|engage story. Remember, this is a snapshot of how God restored/strengthened your marriage, not a timeline.
5. **Focus on feelings more than facts** - Your story will make the biggest impact when you connect emotionally with the audience. When describing events in your marriage try to focus on the way you were feeling at the time more than a point-by-point retelling. The facts of the audiences' marriage will be different than yours, but they will always be able to relate with how a situation made you feel.
6. **Own your part** - Each of you should be honest in describing your *individual* struggles and failures. Own your part, and be sure to highlight God's grace in your weakness, not your heroic faith. Tell it with humility, admitting your continuing need for grace. (This is not the time to throw your spouse under the bus. Let him or her do that themselves.)
7. **Avoid "TMI"** - Be discerning when choosing how to describe an event. Some testimonies contain *too much information* (particularly if they are sexual in nature). Your focus is not the situation but the God who met you in the middle of it. If a detail paints a graphic picture in permanent ink in the

listener's head, leave it out. The one thing we want permanently painted on the mind of our listener is the greatness of God.

8. **Your story should reflect God's transforming power** – not your church, this program, or your own power. His. Tell it in a way that makes God the change agent in your story. This is about Him and for His glory.

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES:

1. **Two weeks before your speaking date** - In order to have time to review your story, please email us your testimony no later than two weeks before your scheduled speaking date.

Brad Hodges (bhodges@tbclife.net)

2. **Type out your testimony** - You will have approximately **20 minutes** to speak. A guideline to achieve this time constraint is roughly a word count of 2800 words, 7- 8 double-spaced pages in 12 pt. font with 1" margins. We will read and edit it with a focus on the audience and aim of the story.
3. **Include 1 or 2 of your favorite Scriptures** – Please include scriptures that encourage you in your marriage. We believe it is God's Word that changes people's hearts and we desire that the audience would hear His word when they come to re|engage. Try to avoid religious clichés and specific denominations as this can serve as a distraction from the heart of your story.
4. **Personal Photos** – Some people choose to include photos to assist in telling their story. This is usually a wedding photo and/or current family photo. If you wish to include photos, please email them in advance along with your testimony.
5. **Stories should be structured into four parts-**

- **The Old Me/Us**

Include your family background, but keep this as **brief** as possible. Remember the key is to talk about your marriage, challenges you have faced, and how God brought restoration and healing. Focus on including only the family history that contributed to future issues in your marriage.

Tell how you met or something about the early days of your relationship.

Tell how your marriage progressed/regressed.

Include what type of relationship you had with God during this time.

- **The Transition**

What was the turning point in your marriage?

How has your growing relationship with Jesus Christ influenced your marriage? Be specific.

- **The New Me/Us**

How had God changed your relationship?

What unhealthy ways of approaching your marriage are gone?

How has each of your individual walks with God changed?

- **Outreach**

What encouragement can you give? Any tips?

Leave the listener with **hope**. They want to believe that their marriage will improve. Remind them that with God nothing is impossible.

Finally, **practice** reading your story several times so that you are comfortable with the flow. Remember to **stick to script**. Couples tend to struggle when they go off script and try to adlib. The art to reading it aloud is to be comfortable enough with the story so that you can look up from the page from time to time without losing your place. This is a great way to keep the audience engaged.

If you have any questions, please contact Brad Hodges (601.450.3048). We are sincerely grateful for your willingness to serve in this way. We are excited to see how the Lord uses the story of His work in your lives to draw others closer in their own marriage and to Him.