

How to Prepare a Personal Testimony

A carefully prepared testimony, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation. It should be our desire to present Christ in a clear and attractive, yet simple, way so that all those who hear will not only *want to* know Him, but they will also know how to know Him personally.

A carefully and intelligently worded three-minute testimony will communicate far more effectively than a prolonged one that includes a lot of extraneous material which will detract from, rather than emphasize, the point of personal commitment to Christ and what this can mean in a person's life.

1. Remember, the same Christ lives in you whether you trusted Him early or later in life. Do not be concerned that your testimony be exciting, just that it be interesting.
2. Be realistic. Do not infer that Christ eliminates all the problems of life, but rather that He enables you to live them out with peace and confidence. "I am with you always."
3. Be positive, not negative, from start to finish.
4. Prepare your testimony so that you can share it in a group situation as well as with an individual.
5. Avoid the following when writing your testimony:
 - a. Including statements that reflect negatively on the Church, other organizations or people.
 - b. Mentioning denominations, especially in a derogatory way.
 - c. Preaching at people. This is a testimony, not a "preachimony."
 - d. Using stereotypes, People who work together for a period of time on a team tend, unwittingly, to copy one another.
 - e. Speaking in generalities or using overworked terms such as:
Strait-laced, sober and sad; right wing conservative, closed minded
Fantastic, exciting and great
Peace, purpose and happiness
Changed (without giving specific changes)
 - f. Using words that are meaningless to non-Christians. Terms like "salvation," "saved," "born again," and "conversion," need to be defined if used. Terms like "glorious," and "hallelujah," have such a negative connotation in some areas that you would do well not to use them at all.
6. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5-6). Follow a three-point outline:
 - a. Life before knowing Christ.
 - b. How you came to know Christ, (be specific)
 - c. Life after you received Christ. (Changes He has made and what He means to you now.)
7. Emphasize point three above if you became a Christian as a small child,
8. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion. Include relevant, thought provoking personal experiences.
9. Write in such a way that others will feel associated with you in past and present experiences.
10. Give enough details to arouse interest.
11. Use at least one, but at the most two, Scripture verses.

12. Edit carefully and rewrite as necessary before the final draft.
13. Choose something characteristic of your experience that is of general interest to non-Christians. Build your own testimony around a theme.
Examples: Personal success - your past viewpoint and now from God's viewpoint;
Life's goals - past and present viewpoint; God's personal plan for you.
14. Emphasize the fact that the thing that made the difference in your life was accepting Christ as Savior and making Him Lord and Master of your life. Keep in mind that your testimony should give enough details so that someone else would know how to trust the Lord after hearing it. Tell how He entered your life.

Testimony Worksheet

These suggestions, questions, and evaluations will help you prepare an effective three-minute testimony. Your testimony should contain a brief explanation of your life before you received Christ, how you became a Christian and what your life has been like since,

You want. Non-Christians to understand your story so avoid complicated Christian terms. Pretend you are talking to a person who has never been to church.

Your testimony may be the most helpful thing a non-Christian will hear- Don't confuse others by adding unnecessary details. Keep to the point. As a result of your story, a non-Christian should know how you became a Christian and how important it is to you.

If you are unsure about when you became a Christian, don't feel that you must give an exact date and time. The important fact that you should relate is that you know Christ is your savior now. You have an exciting testimony to tell even though it may not include a dramatic change from a very sinful life. Remember, Jesus never experienced sin; but He did relate well with people. You don't have to tell when Christ came into your life. Tell about what He is doing in your life now.

Briefly answer the questions in the following outline; then use your answers to complete your testimony.

Before I received Christ:

- What were you like before you became a Christian?
- What were some of your actions, attitudes, or thoughts?
- What would be a good example of this?

How I received Christ: (Be specific, but not wordy.)

- How did you first hear about Jesus Christ?
- What was your initial reaction to what you heard about Jesus Christ?
- Did you radically change your attitude toward Him? If so, why?

After I received Christ; (Emphasize this part of your testimony. Be honest - Christians have problems too.)

- What actions, attitudes, or thoughts listed in part one have you changed? How have they changed?
- What were some of the circumstances surrounding your conversion?
- Has God totally removed any problems from your life? If so, what are they?
- What evidence could you offer that God has done something in your life?
- Put a check by three things in the list below you consider important and would like to communicate to others:
 - God's love
 - God's forgiveness
 - Fulfillment
 - Friendliness of other believers
 - Peace of mind
 - Membership in God's family
 - New perspective on life
 - Freedom from fear of death
 - Assurance of eternal life
 - Purpose for living
 - Freedom from fear of living
 - Freedom from fear of others
 - God's direct counsel from **His** Word

Inner strength
Sense of belonging.
Concern for others
God's help in school, marriage, or job

When you have written your testimony, use the following questions to help you improve it:

1. Does my testimony have too much life history or too many non-essentials?
2. Have I avoided or, explained religious terms that would not be understood by a non-Christian?
3. Have I been honest or does the testimony of how my life has been since receiving Christ sound so problem-free that it appears unreal?
4. Is it three minutes long? If it is longer, what will I eliminate?

How to Share Your Testimony

Memorize your testimony and practice it until it becomes natural,

Share your testimony with loving enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

Smile often! Ask the Lord to give you a happy radiant countenance. Use a natural speaking voice.

Avoid exhibiting nervous habits (especially with your hands) and other mannerisms, such as rubbing your nose, jingling coins in your pocket, swaying, clearing your throat, and using "um", "uh", "ah," and "you know". Exhibit good posture. Do not talk on the way to or from your seat,

Avoid arguing and using other high pressure methods to obtain a "decision" for Christ, Remember, men are born of the Spirit, "not through persuasiveness or logic of men," though God may use both,