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Your Personal Testimony

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Your Personal Testimony

Your personal testimony is one of the greatest tools you have when you share the gospel. People like stories, especially ones that are true. Stories emotionalize information. Jesus often told stories (parables).

No persuasive argument will ever be a substitute for your personal testimony. To be an effective witness, you simply need to tell others what you have seen, heard, and experienced with Jesus (1 John 1:1-3). The famous apologist Josh McDowell said that when he gives his personal testimony and someone asks him how he knows it's true, his answer is this: "I know it's true because I was there."

Recently, I was on a plane from Seattle to Phoenix, and the passenger next to me was a lady from New Zealand. She was in her early 50s and recently divorced. She had just been hired as a tennis instructor at a high-end resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. She had rarely attended church as a child, but she was very interested in talking to me about spiritual matters. I told her that I became a Christian at the age of 19, and she asked me, "How did that happen?" That gave me a wide-open door to share my personal testimony and the gospel with her, and she listened with keen interest. It was a divine appointment.

Examples of Personal Testimonies in Scripture

There are many instances of personal testimonies in Scripture. The woman at the well, for example, believed in the Lord and immediately began telling others about Christ. She went back to her city and said, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done" (John 4:29).

In Mark 5 after Jesus healed the Gerasene demoniac, He told the man, "'Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.' And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him" (Mark 5:19-20; Luke 8:39). In the book of John, Jesus healed the man who was born blind, and then the man testified to the skeptical religious leaders. "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). This was his personal testimony.

The Apostle Paul shared his personal testimony three times in the book of Acts (Acts 22:1-22; 26:12-18) to segue into the gospel. Paul's testimony serves as a biblical model you can follow in developing your own personal testimony.

Your personal testimony, a subjective experience, is backed up by the objective evidence of the resurrection of Christ and the Word of God. Cults and false religions do not have this truth.

Greg Laurie wrote, "The point of sharing your story is so you can tell His story . . . we don't want people marveling over our story, but over . . . the price that He paid because of His great love for us."

Your Story

Practical Importance

A well-prepared personal testimony is a true story about how you met the Lord.

The Preparation

Prayerfully ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5) as you develop your personal testimony. Outline the main elements of your personal testimony.

The Main Elements in a Personal Testimony

A personal testimony has six main parts:

1. *The opening*: Think of a theme you can use to share your story.
2. *Before you came to Christ*: What your life was like before you met Christ.
3. *How you realized your need for Christ*.
4. *After you became a Christian*: The difference Jesus has made in your life.
5. *The closing*

The Opening

Look at "Some Personal Testimony Themes" at the end of this chapter and select the one that fits your life before coming to faith in Christ.

Before You Came to Christ

What was your life like before you met Christ? For example:

- What was lacking in your life?
- How did you attempt to meet what you were lacking—through wrong friends, marriage and family, work, sports, physical fitness, drugs, sex?
- Don't brag about past sins or struggles. Share just enough to show your need for Christ.
- What common circumstances would a non-Christian relate to—attitudes, what was important to you, how you substituted God for something else?

How You Realized Your Need for Christ

What were the circumstances or details that caused you to consider Christ? Explain the events that led to your conversion. How did God get your attention? Be specific. If you became a Christian as a child, focus more on how Christ has made a difference in your life since you became a Christian at an early age.

After You Became a Christian

In the "Before You Came to Christ" section, you expressed your needs and how you did not find fulfillment. In this section, share how Christ made the difference in your life—how He met your needs. Emphasize the changes in your behavior or character since you received Christ. Share a scripture that was meaningful to you at that time. You may want to paraphrase the verse.

The Closing

End with a statement, a question, or a verse that summarizes your story and relates back to your theme, and that requires a response.

Tips on Sharing Your Story

Outline the main points on a 3" x 5" card. Keep it clear and simple (KISS method) and keep it short (2-3 minutes or 100 words or less).

- Ask for permission to share—"Would it be okay if I shared with you how God changed my life?"
- Be honest, positive, and joyful. Don't lie or embellish. Be truthful.
- Don't criticize a church or denomination.
- Consider practicing in front of a fellow believer for input.
- Be conversational—you are sharing, not preaching, your personal testimony.

- Use ordinary language—avoid religious jargon such as redeemed, saved, born again, justified, sanctified, baptized by the Holy Ghost, and so on.
- Include some humor and human interest.
- Highlight God’s presence and power in your life.
- Share before and after stories.
- Compare a life without purpose and direction to a life of deep meaning and purpose.
- Compare self-centeredness to a desire to be more giving and loving.
- Compare the fear of death to peace for the future.
- Compare loneliness to a sense of belonging.
- Compare addiction to something like drugs or pornography to freedom.
- You may have more than one testimony since the Lord is teaching you many things in your life with Him and maturing you in relationship with Him.
- Practice sharing your personal testimony with a friend.
- In your personal testimony, be clear how you received Christ, share the gospel, and invite them to respond.

Use the [Testimony Worksheet](#) to prepare your testimony.