

YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

- I. I Peter 3:15,16 says that we are always to be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks us to give an account for the hope that is within us. One of the best ways that you can be able to explain to others the hope that is in you is through your personal testimony.

Although people can try and argue about the veracity of Christianity's claims, no one can argue with what Christ has done in your own life. Often people are very interested in what the unchanging God of the universe is doing on a personal level. They want to know what Christ is doing in your life.

A testimony is always more effective when it is organized and to the point.

A. HOW TO WRITE A TESTIMONY

1. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write.
2. Prepare your testimony in such a way that you can share it with groups as well as with individuals. Keep your testimony concise and emphasize a personal commitment to Christ.
3. Stay within the three minute time limit! Work at this!
4. Be realistic.
5. Consider your typical audience; write and speak to communicate to them.
6. Use a three point outline containing the following. As you begin, **choose something typical** from your experience that relates well to the non-Christian, and build your testimony around that **THEME**.

B. WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE LIKE BEFORE YOU RECEIVED CHRIST?

1. What were your attitudes, needs, and problems? Remember that examples will go a long way toward establishing you as a credible witness in the minds of non-Christians.
2. Around what did your life revolve? What was most important to you? **Give specific examples.**
3. What did you look to for security, peace of mind and happiness? In what ways did you find your activities not satisfying?

Avoid a "religious" focus. Do not spend a great amount of time talking about your church activities or how bad you used to be before your life began to change. Avoid mundane details about how you grew up! Stick to a theme.

C. WHAT LED TO YOUR DECISION TO TRUST CHRIST? WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GIVE HIM COMPLETE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE, AND HOW DID YOU MAKE THIS DECISION?

1. When did you first hear the Gospel? How? Or when you were first exposed to the Gospel?

For example: "That night as they spoke, it was the first time I can ever remember hearing that God loved me and sent His Son to die for my sins which kept me from knowing Him. And all I needed to do was to commit my life to Him by asking Christ to come into my life."

2. What were your initial reactions to Jesus Christ?
3. When did you begin to have a positive attitude toward Christ or Christianity?
4. What was the turning point in your attitude?
5. What mental barriers did you experience?

For example: "Why should I want to let someone else run my life? Your testimony should include how the mental barrier was removed."

6. How did you receive Christ?

D. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU RECEIVED CHRIST?

1. What changes did you see in your life -- actions, attitudes, and problems? **(use specific examples)**

This point relates to the changes you experienced after Christ came into life or after you gave Him complete control. If you received Him at an early age, what happened after you yielded control of your life to Him as Lord. How did Jesus become truly real to you?

If the changes you mentioned correspond to the problems that you expressed in the first part of the testimony, then you will have a constant theme and your testimony will be more effective.

2. How long did it take before you noticed changes?
3. What does Jesus Christ mean to you now?

II. FORMAT:

A. AVOID THE FOLLOWING TERMINOLOGY:

1. Do not make statements that reflect negatively on churches, other organizations, or other people.
2. Avoid mentioning denominations.
3. Do not use vague terms such as joyful, peaceful, happy or changed without explaining them.
4. Avoid using Biblical words such as saved, born again, converted, or sin without clarifying what you mean.

B. LEARN THE MECHANICS OF WRITING A TESTIMONY

1. Begin with an attention getting sentence or incident.

Use only attention getting phrases or rhetorical questions that are natural and won't make your audience tense.

2. Be positive from start to finish.
3. Be specific. Give enough details to arouse interest.
4. Be natural.
 - As a general guideline, do your best to help people understand and know you.
5. Be accurate.
6. Include relevant thought-provoking experiences.
7. Use one or two Scripture verses, but only when they relate directly to your experience and fit in naturally.
8. Write a good closing to complete your testimony.
 - Avoid sticking a Scripture verse onto the end of your testimony. Its much better to refer to it in the body of your testimony where it relates to your experience. Conclude with specific changes you have experienced.
9. Edit and rewrite as needed.

C. **PRESENTING YOUR TESTIMONY** - Here are some principles to remember so you can communicate effectively to a group.

1. **Do not open in prayer! Be sure and pray before you are introduced.**
2. Rehearse it until it becomes natural.
3. Share it with enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Smile often. Ask the Lord to give you a pleasant expression.
5. Speak clearly, but in a relaxed natural tone. Speak loudly enough to be heard. If there is a microphone, always use it! Don't fight it! Get use to it.
6. Avoid nervous mannerisms such as swaying, playing with a pencil, jingling change, playing with your hair, and clearing your throat.
7. Do not talk on the way to or from your seat.
8. Avoid speaking in a "preaching" manner.
 - Preaching will not communicate nearly as well as "sharing yourself" with the audience. Speak about personal experiences in your own life to which they can relate. Let the Holy Spirit do the convicting.
 - Don't forget, a successful testimony is one that you give in the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving the results to God.
9. **Action point: MEMORIZE YOUR TESTIMONY AND PRESENT IT TO AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP, PREFERABLY NON-CHRISTIANS.**

TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

1. A beginning, attention-getting sentence.
2. What was your life like **BEFORE** you received Christ?
3. What led to your decision to trust Christ? Why did you give Him complete control of your life, and **HOW** did you make this decision?
4. What happened **AFTER** you received Christ? What changes did you see in your life?
5. Write a good closing.