

How to Prepare a Personal Testimony

A carefully prepared testimony, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, can be effectively used in nearly every witnessing situation. Our desire should be to present Jesus in a clear, attractive, yet simple, way so that those who hear will want to enter into a vibrant personal relationship with Him..

As you begin to prepare spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you. A carefully worded three-minute culturally sensitive testimony will communicate far more effectively than one that includes extraneous material which detracts from, rather than emphasizes, the point of personal commitment to Jesus and what this can mean in a person's life.

1. Be interesting - Remember, the same Jesus 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 Jesus eliminates all the problems of life, but rather that He enables you to live with peace and confidence. "I am with you always."
3. Be positive, not negative, from start to finish.
Avoid including statements that reflect negatively on the church, other organizations or people.
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. Mentioning denominations. In today's world most people are willing to hear and learn about Jesus, but become totally uninterested when you mention a denomination.
 - b. Preaching at people. This is a testimony, not a "preachimony."
 - c. Using stereotypes, People who work together for a period of time on a team tend, unwittingly, to copy one another.
 - d. 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)
 - e. Using words that are meaningless to non westerners and/or non-Jesusians. 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 should avoid them.
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 Jesus.
 - b. How you came to know Jesus, (be specific)
 - c. Life after you received Jesus. (Changes He has made and what He means to you now.)
7. Emphasize point 6c above if you became a Jesusian as a small child.
8. Choose something characteristic of your experience that is of general interest to non-Jesusians. 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.

9. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion. Include relevant, thought provoking personal experiences.
10. Write in such a way that others will feel associated with you in past and present experiences.
11. Give enough details to arouse interest.
12. Use Scripture, but be aware that some foreign translations do not have the same chapter/verse structure as in our English editions. As such it might be better just to reference that "Scripture says....", or "Jesus said in John..."
13. Emphasize the impact of accepting Jesus 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.
14. If you are unsure about when you became a Jesusian, don't feel that you must give an exact date and time. The important fact that you should relate is that you know Jesus 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 Jesus came into your life. Tell about what He is doing in your life now.
15. Edit carefully and rewrite as necessary.

The following are some questions to think about as you begin to prepare your testimony. Briefly answer the questions in the following outline; then use your answers to complete your testimony.

Before I received Jesus:

- What were you like before you became a Jesusian?
- What were some of your actions, attitudes, or thoughts?
- What would be a good example of this?
- What were some of the circumstances surrounding your conversion?

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

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

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

- How have the actions, attitudes, or thoughts listed in part one changed?
- 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 outers
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 religious terms that would not be understood by a non-Jesusian living in a foreign country?
3. Have I been honest or does the testimony of how my life has been since receiving Jesus 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 Jesus, Remember, men are born of the Spirit, "not through persuasiveness or logic of men," though God may use both,