

## Your Story is God's Story: Your Testimony

*"If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way" (1 Peter 3:15-16)*

Every time we tell our story (our testimony) we give honor and glory to God, and He is pleased with that.

One of the greatest witnessing tools we have available to us is the testimony of a changed life. We can look at many examples in the Bible of people who came to Christ, were saved and walked away changed. That same thing is happening today. You have the ability to share your story of a changed life. When sharing your testimony you want to remember that while this is a blessing to those who are saved, it can be used by God to reach the unsaved.

Your story – regardless of how “spectacular” or “ordinary” you think it is – is a story about God’s character. It is your eyewitness account of how God rescued you from sin and death through Christ, and changed your life as a result.

When we share our story with others we help them get to know what God is like and what He can do.

Events and testimonies in the Bible are examples for us today. The Bible says that the things written are there to serve as examples and encouragement for us today (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Writing your testimony beforehand will be a big help in keeping you on track. Take a few minutes now to work through these questions so you can be ready for the next open door God gives you to tell your story.

### **My Life Before Christ**

1. What about my life before Christ will relate most to the non-Christians I know?
2. What did my life revolve around? Where did I get my security, identity or happiness from?
3. How did those things begin to let me down?

### **How I Came to Christ**

1. When was the first time I heard the gospel? What were my initial reactions?
2. When and why did my perspective begin to change toward Christ?
3. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Him? Why did I finally decide to accept Christ (or give Him complete control of my life)?

### **My Life After Coming to Christ**

1. How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude and perspective on life.
2. What motivates me now? What do I live for?
3. Even though my life still isn't perfect, how does knowing Christ help me deal with that fact?

Now that you've answered these questions, take a few minutes to write out your story as if you were telling it to someone.

### **Be Ready**

Whether you are in line at the grocery store, sitting with a family member or standing in front of a group of people, the Bible calls

us to “always be ready” to explain our hope in Christ with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Sometimes we like to think that because it’s our story, we don’t have to do anything to be ready to tell it. After all, we were there when it happened, and we’re living it now.

Yet we can get nervous, become side-tracked or forget things when sharing our testimonies, which can be confusing or distracting for those listening. This is why a little preparation and practice can be so valuable.

### **Put it Together**

Let’s take a look at how to put your story together, section by section. **There are five basic parts to your story:** the opening, your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, your life after Christ, and the closing.

1. **The Opening.** Identify a theme you can use to frame your story. What did your life revolve around (e.g. relationships, your reputation, money) that God used to help bring you to Him? Briefly illustrate how that influenced your life.
2. **Your Life Before Christ.** Paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ. Don’t dwell too much on, or brag about, past sin struggles. Share only the details that relate to your theme — just enough to show your need for Christ. Give your readers and listeners specific examples of how God worked in your life. Again, you don’t need to share the details of your sin. However, the more examples of real events you can give, the more the audience will relate. Those who are not saved will see more credibility in your testimony if you tell the real ways God has changed you.

3. **How You Came to Christ.** Give the details about why and how you became a Christian. Communicate in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how they can become a Christian, too. Even if your listeners are not ready for that, God could use your story and explanation of the gospel to draw them to Himself in the future.
  
4. **Your Life After Coming to Christ.** Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life as they relate to your theme. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude or perspective, not just mere changes in behavior. Be realistic. We still struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect, but what's different about your life now? **Share your Current Situation.** What is God doing in your life today? It is great to hear what He did last year (or 30 years ago) in saving you, but your audience will want to know that God is still at work in your life today
  
5. **The Closing.** End with a statement that summarizes your story and connects everything back to your theme. If you want, close with a Bible verse that relates to your experience. Make sure you honor God the one who saved you when you share your testimony with others.

### Helpful Hints

- Pray before you write out and share your story. Ask God for wisdom and the words to say.
- Write the way you speak.
- Don't be overly negative or positive. Be honest.

- Keep it short. Aim to keep your story to three to five minutes. At that length, it's easily something you can share in a conversation without it becoming a speech.
- Practice your testimony out loud several times until you feel comfortable with it.
- Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.
- Think about your listener(s). Avoid overly-religious terms.
- Practice telling your story until it becomes natural.

Congratulations! You've created your personal testimony.

The Lord can use you to help others come to know Christ. Ask God for opportunities to share your story and the gospel with others.