

Testimony Preparation

The Apostle Peter says in I Peter 3:15 “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have.” This is your story of how you came to follow Jesus Christ. The book of I John is written as the testimony of John’s relationship with Jesus, “We proclaim what we have seen and heard (I Jn 1:3).” We get an outline for what we should communicate in our testimonies from Paul’s testimony before King Agrippa (Acts 26). He told about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life is like after conversion. If you read Paul’s testimony out loud in a conversational tone it will take about 3 – 4 minutes.

Ideally your testimony should take 3 – 5 minutes to communicate. Most seekers will tune you out afterwards. The attraction of the testimony to seekers is that it is your personal story. Thus, it is intriguing to most. You will want to communicate your story with words that are common to the hearer. It is easy to use Christian words such as “saved,” “convicted,” “sanctified,” “born again.” These words are only confusing and create a barrier between the Christian world and the world of the seeker.

Outline of a Personal Testimony

Before— a short sketch of what your life was like before you became a Christian.

How— how, specifically, you took the step to becoming a Christian.

After— relating to the changes in your life.

Guidelines for Preparing Your Testimony

1. Make it sound conversational. It should sound natural when spoken.
2. Say “I” and “me,” not “you” (share, don’t preach).
3. Avoid religious words, phrases, and jargon.
4. Generalize so more people can identify with your story.
Avoid references to specific denominations or groups.
5. Include some human interest.
6. In the “before” include both good and bad aspects of your life.
7. In the “how”

Communicate the Gospel clearly and briefly

- a) the fact of sin
- b) the penalty of sin
- c) Christ’s payment of the penalty
- d) Requirement to receive Christ

Make the Bible the authority for the knowledge of sin and need for Christ.

Use the word pray when you talk about receiving Christ so they know what to do.

8. In the “after,” briefly conclude with two or three personal benefits of becoming a Christian.
9. Avoid dogmatic statements which skeptics can question.
10. Sound adult, not juvenile (particularly if you received Christ as a child).
11. Simplify, reduce “clutter.” Mention examples, important steps, not every detail.