

## How to Share Your Testimony

Your testimony can be a simple and effective way to share the Gospel... the Good News of Jesus Christ. It can also help and encourage others who believe. Though it takes some boldness, it's something that every Christian is able to do. You are simply telling the story of how you came to place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the One who saves you from your sins. It's your story. You lived it, and so you know it well. And in telling it, you may find that God uses you to draw someone to Himself. Regardless of what happens, you will be pleasing God because you are doing what He has asked His followers to do. As we are obedient we can confidently leave the results up to Him.

### Some examples of people giving testimonies in the Bible:

Psalm 40:1-3 (David speaks of God's deliverance)

Mark 5:18-20 (The man who had been demon-possessed)

John 9 (The man who had been blind)

Acts 22:1-21 (Paul giving His testimony to the Jews)

Acts 26:1-23 (Paul giving His testimony to King Agrippa)

### While it's not complicated, there are some things to keep in mind.

- Ask God to help you. Call to Him. He will help you!
- Glorify God, not yourself. This is not about you. It's about His working in your life.
- Keep the purpose in mind. People need to know about sin, it's penalty, God's love, and their need for Jesus.
- Keep your audience in view. You may share differently depending on who you're speaking too.
- Be real. People are cautious. We all relate better to people who are genuine and honest.
- Tell stories within the bigger story. It makes it more interesting and easier to listen.
- Share things that others can relate to. It can help draw people in and keep their attention.
- Don't go into inappropriate details of past sins or experiences. This can be harmful.
- Avoid religious or church words like "Jesus in my heart". You want people to understand what you're saying. If you do need to use such words, explain what they mean.
- Be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. He can guide us in what to say.
- Use God's Word. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Share any verses that God used in your journey, or that are helpful in giving God's perspective.
- Talk about Jesus. Often people can "believe" in God, but it's Jesus they need to put their trust in.
- Your life should back up what you say. Our lives often speak louder than our words. Be aware that people are watching.

### Where do I begin?

If you have the time and you sense that it's appropriate, consider starting at the beginning. Everyone likes an interesting story. Where were you born? What was your childhood like? What significant events happened in your life that shaped who you are? In sharing these things you are communicating that you are a real person that they can relate too. You are building a foundation for them to understand more deeply how you came to know of your need to be saved. Be careful not to lose your audience in boring or unnecessary details. Stick to those things which are important to your story and which support your need for Christ or demonstrate His power in your life. It's possible that in sharing these things you will make it easier for your audience to connect with you... especially those who have had similar experiences. "Hey, that happened to me too." If their heart is open, they will listen with interest to see why things are different for you now.

Sometimes we have the opportunity to share our testimony because someone told us about a particular struggle they are having. If you can relate to them because of your own journey that may be a good place to begin. Again, they may be more willing to hear what you have to say knowing that you can relate to them.

If you haven't experienced what they are going through you can still show them concern. We can share with confidence knowing that the Holy Spirit is at work and has provided the opportunity.

Sometimes you have an opportunity to share, but are limited in the amount of time you have. Other times it's just not appropriate to share your whole story. In these situations, it's probably best to start with the place where you realized that you were a sinner and that there was nothing you could do to save yourself. Tell how you came to that understanding. Then go from there.

It may be helpful to have different length versions of your story ready to share so that you are prepared for whatever opportunities God may give you.

In all this, it's important to remember that your aim is not to talk about you or draw attention to yourself. Your aim is to, through your testimony, share with others their need for Jesus. What you say should point people to Him and bring Him honor.

### **Key Principles: It takes GUTS to share your testimony effectively.**

- **Glorify God, not yourself** – Whatever you do in Word or deed, do all to the glory of God. Remember that the focus is on God and what He has done for you... and what He can do for others.
- **Use Scripture** – “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17  
The Word of God is powerful. By using it, you are bringing God's perspective and authority into your story. If someone wants to argue, they need to argue with God, not you.
- **Tell it like it is** – Be real.  
People are perceptive. Be sincere, honest, and friendly. Don't let fear control how you share. Avoid religious words unless you can explain what they mean. And do not pretend to be something that you're not.
- **Sin and a Savior** – There's no good news without understanding the bad.  
Too many people hear the Good News and “Try it” only to find that it's not what they thought it was. We all need to come to an understanding that in our sin we are lost and hopeless before God and that we will be judged and punished in Hell for our wrong-doing. When we understand this, we are then ready to hear that God has provided hope... we are ready for the Good News about Jesus.

### **Okay, I'm willing, but not sure what to say.**

In this case it's good to write it out. Doing this will help you think through your testimony. Then, by reading it aloud, you can hear if it's making sense. You'll also become familiar telling it and comfortable hearing yourself say things that you may not normally talk about. If it sounds awkward, you'll hear it and be able to change things to make them more understandable. We don't recommend reading your testimony to others because it can seem impersonal. People connect with you best when you're talking with them, not reading to them. But if you need to read it, you'll be ready because it's already written.

Share it with a believing friend. For some, the idea of sharing their testimony can be scary. It's good to have a saved friend or family member to practice on. Not only does it help us get used to telling our story to others, but we also benefit from their advice and encouragement. Hey, they may even want to join you.

### **Need help preparing your testimony? Answering the following questions may help:**

- What was life like before you were saved?
- What made you aware of your sin and a need for a savior?
- What made you decide to put your trust in Jesus? Describe how it happened?
- What is different now since He saved you?
- In summary, what has God done for you?

Here's what a testimony looks like based on those questions - adapted from Carroll Hill's "Storyteller" testimony:

- **What was life like before you were saved?**

I grew up in an abusive home. It was pretty rough. My dad was an alcoholic. I remember hearing my mother screaming and kids being beat up and thrown against the wall and thrashed around. It was always harder seeing the other kids get it even though I didn't enjoy it myself. When I was 15, after hearing some more screaming, I decided that I had had enough. We had guns in the house. The next day I grabbed one and headed for the bush. I hid behind a tree and waited for my father. When I saw him, I cocked the rifle and sighted him up... I wanted to pull the trigger so bad... but something wouldn't let me do it. All of us suffered a miserable youth.

- **What made you aware of your sin and your need for a savior?**

I remember early on feeling bad about the wrong things I did. Mom would take us to church and Dad made us go, so I had heard the Gospel and about Jesus and that He died on the cross to pay for my sin. I wanted to get things right and tried. I went forward in a meeting but that didn't help because I didn't understand. I prayed and cried but I was powerless to change the wrong things I was doing. I had gotten into stealing and other stuff. I knew that I was messed up and needed help.

- **What made you decide to put your trust in Jesus? How did it happen?**

When I was 18, I realized that my life was going downhill fast. I knew I needed to be saved but I just couldn't get a hold of it. But it finally made sense when I saw 1 John 5... *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.* What he is saying there is that we believe men... we accept what people say (like when we watch the news). How much more should we believe God? God said that those who are trusting in His Son, Jesus, have life. I hadn't completely believed that Jesus could save me, and in effect, I was calling God a liar. I would pray and try to do it myself, but I just wasn't getting anywhere. John 20:21 tells us about the Gospel (the Good News)... that *these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* but I hadn't fully accepted that or come to a conclusion. I needed to accept God's witness. It was like the lights came on. I needed to believe it with all my heart. And so I believed then about what God had said about His Son and put my trust in Jesus to save me from my sins and make me right with God. From that time forward I had assurance that I was saved... not because I think so or hope so... but because He said it. He did it, Christ paid the price for me, I accepted it, and on the basis of that, I have eternal life today. And I know that for sure.

- **What is different now since He saved you?**

Since I've been born again my whole life changed. I was born into God's family and I belong to God forever. Sure I've had my struggles like everyone else. But when I understood that He had given me eternal life, there was no way I wanted to go back and feed in the garbage. I just wanted to walk with God. People noticed that I had a different attitude. After I got saved I had a compassion for my dad. I was able to forgive him. I hated him before but now I wanted to see him get saved. I didn't want him to go to hell. He had left some time before. I hunted him down and went to visit him in Washington State and thanked him for the good work ethic he taught me. I had a chance to share the Gospel with him.

- **In summary, what has God done for you?**

The blessing is to know Christ and to walk with Him. I'm so glad to be forgiven and know that someday we will be in Heaven where the Bible says that there will be people there from every tongue, tribe, and nation. I'm so thankful that God saved me.

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