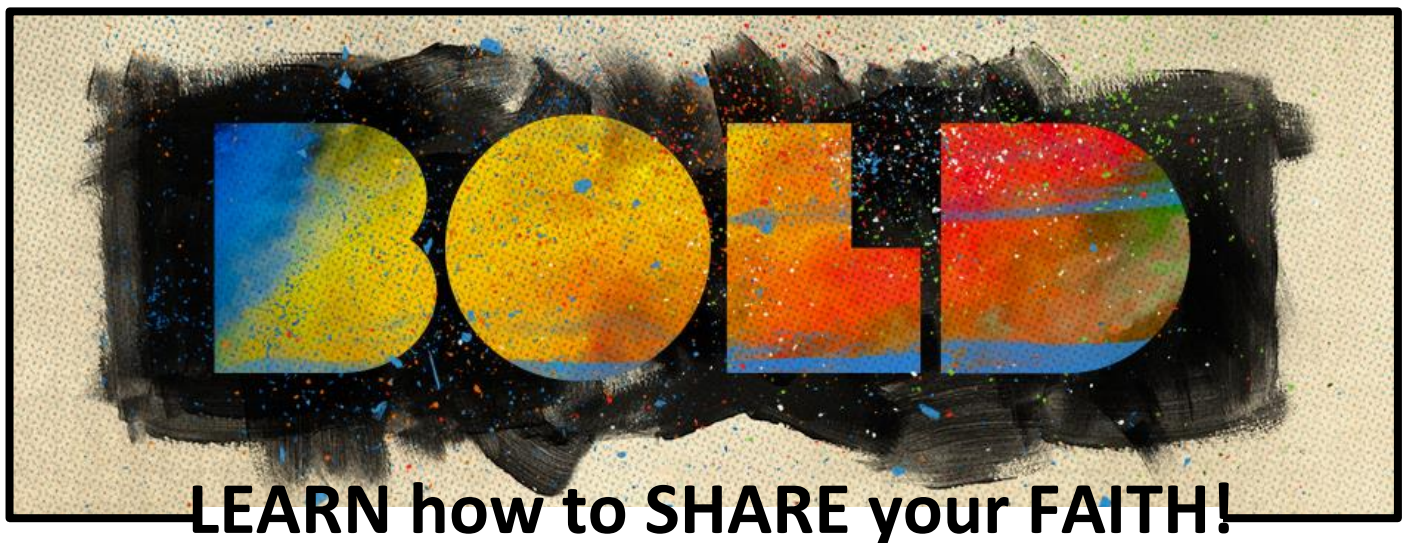


BOLD

USING
YOUR TESTIMONY



Using Your Personal Testimony

Your Personal Testimony is a Display of God's Grace for God's Glory

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.

Be Ready

Whether 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).

The Apostle Paul was always ready to give his personal testimony and shared it multiple times. When the apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26), he spoke logically and clearly about his life *before* salvation, *how* he met Christ, and what his life was like *after* conversion. Paul's testimony takes three or four minutes to read aloud in a conversational manner.

It is essential for you to be able to write out your personal testimony—not for the purpose of memorizing and sharing it verbatim, but because it helps to put into words some of the important and interesting details of your relationship with Christ. Our individual stories are some of the most powerful discipleship and evangelism tools because they are so deeply unique to us. Therefore, choosing the right words, the flow of your story, and knowing how to begin and end are all important.

Put it Together

Let's look at how to structure your story, section by section. **There are three basic parts to your story:** your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, and your life after Christ.

1. **Your Life Before Christ.** Paint a picture of your life before you came to Christ. Don't dwell too much on, or brag about, past sin struggles. Instead, share only the details related to your salvation story — just enough to show your need for Christ.

Before you met Christ, what were some of your needs, what was lacking, or what was missing in your life?

What solutions for your life did you try that didn't work?

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. (Galatians 1:13-14)

2. **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.

What were the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ?

Tell how you trusted Christ, and briefly include the Gospel.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (Galatians 1:15-16)

3. **Your Life After Coming to Christ.** Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life. 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?

Give an example of how Christ met your needs or how He is now contributing to your life.

End with a sentence to the effect that you know that you have eternal life through Christ.

And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me. (Galatians 1:22-24)

HELPFUL HINTS

- Pray before you write out and share your story.
- Write the way you speak.
- Don't be overly negative or positive. Be honest.
- Don't share your "dirty laundry" or glamourize sin.
- Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.
- Think about your listener(s). Avoid overly-religious terms.
- Keep it short. Aim to tell your story in three to five minutes.
- Practice telling your story until it becomes natural.

Personal Testimony Worksheet

Reason For It:

- ❖ It gives you something to say when asked to give a testimony on the spur of the moment.
- ❖ It gives you time to think and pray about what you will say ahead of time.
- ❖ It aids in sticking to the subject and prevents rambling.

Things To Include:

- ❖ Explain sin and that we are all sinners (how you knew you were a sinner).
- ❖ Explain the penalty of sin.
- ❖ Share God's love and what Jesus Christ did for you.
- ❖ Tell how they can have forgiveness and receive eternal life.

NOTE = your testimony should always include the GOSPEL.

Name: _____

Why I received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior: use Romans 3:23 & 6:23

[illegible]

How I received Christ (include circumstances that led to this): use Romans 5:8 & 10:9

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8 Steps to Use Your Personal Testimony

Each Christian has a personal story of how he/she came to know Jesus in a personal, life-changing way. You can use your personal testimony to spread the Gospel of Christ in personal evangelism.

Make sure you avoid the cheesy clichés – be authentic.

1. Use your testimony.

- You have both current stories of God's work in your life, as well as your conversion story.
- Even if you had a less-than-dramatic experience in becoming a Christian, it is still important.
- You can talk about how the Lord is changing your life daily.
- Tell how He is helping you raise your children or do your job. This is particularly helpful if you sense a similar need in your friend.
- Read The power of personal testimony
- You might want to think in terms of transformational stories, rather than testimony. Testimony may have been confined only to the conversion experience. But we can talk of God's current work in transforming our lives today.

2. Your story has power.

- First, it's personal. You don't have to memorize Bible verses or worry about telling it correctly.
- Second, it is conversational. It's not a sermon. It can be shared over a cup of coffee or after a round of golf.
- Third, no one can dispute it. If you have joy, peace, and love in your life as a result of knowing Christ, that will be evident.
- Fourth, it is interesting. It's natural for friends to want to know more about each other.
- Even if your friend is antagonistic to the Gospel, he/she may still be interested in why you value your relationship with a man named Jesus.

3. Plan your testimony.

- You can use Paul's testimony in Acts 26 as your outline.
- Tell them about your life before Christ.
- You don't need to go into embarrassing detail, but you do need to be frank enough about your story so that those who hear it can compare you back then with you right now.
- Describe the conversion experience that you had.
- Be honest and genuine and provide the relevant details. After all, this is when you receive the gift of eternal life.
- Explain what your life is like now.
- What have you stopped doing or started doing as a result of your new life?
- If you need help developing your testimony, start with this Personal Evangelism Testimony Questionnaire

4. Point people to Jesus.

- This is your story, but it has meaning only because Jesus is part of it. The purpose of your story is so that the other person will come to Christ.
- The key question to keep in mind:
- Where is Jesus in this story? Where is the activity of God?

5. Clearly explain the Gospel message.

- Take pains to explain the Gospel clearly and simply.
- Perhaps use one of the gospel scripts.
- Make sure you know how to use a gospel script.
- It's easy to get caught up in the emotion of reliving your life-changing story, but the real story is the Gospel.
- But be sensitive to the moment and discern if the Holy Spirit is opening the doors for this.

6. Share several key Scripture verses.

- You'll probably want to share John 3:16; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; John 14:6; and John 1:12.
- Add any favorite verses you may have.
- Most gospel scripts have a string of verses that support their story.

7. Avoid abstract Christian terms.

- As a test, define the following terms as simply as you can, so your non-Christian friends understand them: saved, born again, sin, faith, repentance, receive Christ, lost, eternal life.
- See my use of Christianese: What is a prayer burden?

8. Explain how you actually received Christ.

- Share enough detail so the other person will know what to do if he/she has the desire to know Christ. Often, not knowing the logistics of receiving Christ keeps people from doing what their hearts long for.
- For example, my friend last week asked me, How do I start following Christ – he wanted to know how to pray, how to receive that gift. He actually asked me to help him pray.